

APRIL 2024

Questa del Rio News

QUESTA • RED RIVER • CERRO • COSTILLA • AMALIA • LAMA • SAN CRISTOBAL

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Que Viva Cristo Rey: Locals Walk for Annual Good Friday Pilgrimage



Photo by Mikayla Ortega

Walkers leave the Cerro Church as they make their way to St. Anthony's Church in Questa

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

In the early morning of Friday, March 29, faithful Catholics in northern New Mexico joined together in unity with their rosaries, holy water, and metals to walk in prayer, devotion, meditation, praise, and worship as they completed their pilgrimages to their holy destination.

In Chimayo, walkers start their journeys from as far away as Albuquerque, making their way to the Santuario de Chimayo. Most walkers are in siloed groups and each carry various guides, or Gilas, as they journey to their intended destination.

In Questa, walkers have been making the annual pilgrimage since the 1980s, where they started walking, offering pilgrimages for vocations to the holy life in the church. Fast forward to today, the group still makes the early morning journey starting in Costilla at the Sagrado Corazon Catholic Church. Walkers arrive anxiously just before 4 a.m., preparing for their long day into Good Friday's pilgrimage. The tradition has historic ties to Spain, a nod to the cultural representation in Northern New Mexico.

Through the walk, the Gila, or the cross, leads the group at all times and none of the walkers are permitted to walk in front of it. The group joins in unison singing, praying, and meditating on the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus. As the group arrives in Cerro, around 10:30 in the morning, they



Photo by Mikayla Ortega

Walkers continue to make their way toward Questa, here led by Ayla Cisneros and her daughter

stop at the Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Catholic Church to meet a group of faithful for the Encuentro, or the meeting of Jesus and his mother Mary, similar to how Jesus met his mother on his way to Calvary. A reenactment of this meeting unfolds in the aisles of the church, and Hermanos carry Jesus away from the church to the Morada with the walkers following behind them.

Walkers then continue with new members who have joined them in Cerro, as they make their way to St. Anthony's Church in Questa. Feelings of exhaustion start to come over many walkers as they continue working to stay in prayer and meditation, making their way through Questa to the church.

At the church, families, locals, and the local priest Fr. Andrew Ifele wait for them as they enter the parking lot singing in unison "Vienen con Alegria," an ages-old song in Catholic Hispanic communities expressing how those who walk with life in unison with the Lord walk in peace and love, bringing hope to a world laden with anxiety and worry.

When the walkers reach the church, they are free to leave, but many stay through the sacred three hours of Good Friday as they pray the Stations of the Cross, reflecting and praying on the sacred time Jesus was hanging from the Cross, dying for the salvation of the world.

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EDITORIAL

Faith And Culture Are One And The Same In Northern New Mexico

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Growing up, I remember my grandparents were devout Catholics, but their faith was especially present during the Lenten season. On Good Friday, we would spend the day praying, in anticipation for the death and crucifixion of our Lord. We would attend church to meet the peregrinos who journeyed to the church from Costilla and pray with them. Oftentimes, we would fast as a penance for our sins and the sins of the world.

Fast forward to a time when the memories of our experiences in the church are all I have left, I cling sincerely to the one thing my grandparents left me: the faith. I remember before my grandfather passed away, he asked my grandma if she thought I'd ever leave the faith. At the time, I was in my mid-20s and not attending mass regularly. I remember sitting near their room, overhearing their conversation. She told him, "No. I think she will always come back because this is the gift we gave her."

When I think of my identity as a norña and a Questeña, I cannot remember a time in my life where God was not at the center. Being Hispanic in my experience has been

synonymous with being a Christian believer who follows Christ. I've done several 20+ mile pilgrimages in my life, and through those experiences, you see and truly feel the presence of Christ in your life but also, in the lives of fellow walkers who are walking through blisters, body aches, and illnesses as a penance, uniting their suffering with Christ and overcoming what would be impossible with the help and devotion to Christ.

This Lenten season may have been a season of suffering, pain, or renewal for you. As we saw in the bible, on Easter morning, several women that were close to Jesus go to the tomb and find the stone rolled away and an angel who announces, "Don't be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen" (Matthew 28:5-6). This shows there is hope after the pain, darkness and anguish.

Our faith, left by our ancestors and beloved family members who have passed on is a gift, to help us remember we are loved. Don't be afraid to rediscover and nourish the seeds planted by those who left us our culture and our faith.



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Northern NM Communities Celebrate Easter

By STAFF WRITERS

There were various Easter egg celebrations in the northern Taos County communities to come together and enjoy this spring holiday.

In Questa, the community-wide Easter egg hunt was on Saturday, March 30. Mayor John Ortega thanked some of the event's sponsors, Living Word Ministries, Freedom Questa Church, and the Catholic Knights of Columbus. There were other supporters, including the Taos Community Foundation. Additionally, Freedom Church donated over 2,000 eggs for the hunt!

In Amalia, the community held their Easter egg hunt on the same day, Saturday March 30. The Amalia Neighborhood Association posted several photos of the festivities, with a post that said “thank you to everyone who came out today. Thank you to everyone who helped today and thank you to everyone who donated money so that we can make this possible.”

Early on Easter morning, Sunday March 31, community members gathered at the Eagle Rock Lake for the annual Sunrise Service as hosted by Living Word Ministries and the First Baptist Church in Red River. The service followed local celebrations at the parishes, including at Freedom Church.



Photo courtesy Amalia Neighborhood Association

Kids look for eggs for the Costilla and Amalia community Easter Egg Hunt



Photo by Mikayla Ortega

Locals gather for Sunrise Service at Eagle Rock Lake on Easter Morning



Photo by Dylan R.N. Crabb

Kids look for eggs at the Questa community Easter Egg Hunt

POEM OF THE MONTH

Swirling snowflakes falling down
Melting as they hit the ground
Calming cold air without a sound.

Green sage tops collect the drift
White cotton balls soft and swift
Blue crisp and clean for a whiff.

Winter's gray acts like a thief
Springtime is hiding beneath
Sprouting seeds seeking relief.

The evening is clear as a bell
No wind—not a cloud to tell
An evangelical story about hell.

The stars are twinkling bright
Just when things seem alright
A meteor strikes sparking the night.

February leaps every fourth year
March naked moon ends near
April Fools kicks one in the rear!

—Señor Miguel, Ghost Writer

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE APRIL ISSUE OF QUESTA DEL RIO NEWS!

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Business Profile

Cerro Vista Farms

BUSINESS GRAPPLING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE WORKS TO TRANSITION BUSINESS MODEL

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Growing produce in the arid environment of Taos County has proven difficult for many locals. Unpredictable water availability has been an obstacle, often-times discouraging long-term ranching and farming in the area.

Local farmer Daniel Carmona knows a thing or two about farming local produce in northern Taos County as he's done it successfully for 46 years. A California native, Carmona says his life never really started until he moved to New Mexico in 1977 and began farming.

Carmona established and operated a farm for ten years in Arroyo Hondo where he also served as Mayordomo of the acequia. He farmed another ten years in Los Colonias, and planted his roots permanently in Cerro in 1995, where he established Cerro Vista Farm on 38 acres of irrigated land. His main crops have been vegetables, and his main customers for the past 40 years have been the regulars at the Taos and Questa Farmers Markets, plus loyal farm share customers, who have helped finance the farm operation by purchasing a share of the farm's production each year before he plants his crops.

Having served as a Mayordomo and as a vegetable farmer, Carmona appreciated the natural beauty of acequia-based agriculture. However, he realized that with limited annual snowfall, the acequia system worked best for families with small vegetable gardens who could irrigate once per week, or with their pasture or alfalfa acreage for livestock, which could be sustained with as few as three or four irrigations per year.

For growing multiple acres of vegetables to sell, however, the need for irrigation water many times per week proved necessary. In Cerro, he found the water necessary to build a new farm designed to empower local community members to grow their own fresh produce.

Always wanting to be a farmer ever since he was a child, the past 46 years have been a dream come true for Carmona—however, they have come with a price.



Courtesy photo

Cerro Vista Farms Seedlings are ready to be sold

“Ever since I started my farm in Cerro, I have worked 80 hours per week to ensure the farm successfully functions to meet the needs of the community and stay afloat financially.”

The effects of the changing climate has only added to the work. “Over the past 12 years, the climate has warmed significantly. The growing season used to be 90 days long; now it is about 110 days long. The longer growing season has been helpful, but along with the increased warmth, extreme and unpredictable events are happening.” In 2022, the farm experienced two catastrophic summer hailstorms, which damaged 100 percent of the crops during the height of the season. While still on the rebound of this setback, in 2023, another catastrophic event—very hungry deer grazing the fields at night, destroyed all of his broccoli, cauliflower, and kale crops.

“In 26 years of farming in Cerro, I have never had deer damage the crops, so I had no elk or deer fencing in place. It is obvious that after many years of extreme drought, the deer can't find enough to eat in the wild, so they are ranging further away from the mountains.” In order to finish out the 2022 and 2023 seasons, honoring his commitment to his employees and to the community, Carmona was forced to spend most of his retirement savings to keep it all afloat.

With rapidly changing times, including the effects of climate change, combined with his need to move towards retirement



Photo by Gaeta McGahee

Daniel Carmona

(he is 74), Carmona is actively adapting his previous business model to meet these challenges. He describes it as his “good fortune,” that one of his staff at the farm was previously an executive business consultant. Barbara “Kestrel” Andrus brought her experience in business development/succession planning to the situation, encouraging exploration of a new business model that would allow Carmona to work towards retirement, while also honoring his commitment to continue to serve the community with local produce.

Their current joint venture, Sunshine Seedlings, is the first iteration of what the future might hold: The formation of a sep-



Courtesy photo

A variety of offerings at Cerro Vista Farms Seedlings

arate business entity, (eventually entities) utilizing the existing farm infrastructure. The model offers an example of a way to “pass the torch” by facilitating others to utilize the farm as a place to launch their own businesses. Carmona is open to leasing the land and equipment, and providing mentorship to persons and organizations committed to local farming. He wants to disseminate the vital knowledge he has accrued from his many years of farming and operating a business. He is currently in dialogue with Questa High School and Questa Sangre de Cristo Market, Questa

CERRO VISTA FARM cont'd on page 6



By BRITTANY MAES, REAL ESTATE AGENT

What's the Real Scoop?

Questa del Rio News is starting a regular column discussing the real estate market from a Taos County perspective. Brittany Maes is a real estate agent with Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices and Taos Real Estate. This is not a paid or compensated advertisement.

Have you watched the news lately? Well if you haven't, I am sure you have scrolled through TikTok or Instagram and seen the buzz, reporting that mortgage interest rates are high these days.

Interest rates are higher than they've been in quite a while. From January 2022 to November 2023, the average rate for a 15-year fixed-rate mortgage jumped from around 2.3 percent all the way to over 7 percent. And even though the average rate dropped to under 6 percent during January 2024, that's still nearly 4

percent higher than the lowest rates we saw back in 2021. Which I get—trust me, I do. I am never here to convince anyone to buy or sell, ultimately I'm here to guide you in the process. I am here to offer you perspective and knowledge on how the housing market is trending in Taos County and northern New Mexico.

Lots of folks haven't been able to afford to buy real estate because of high interest rates, so they've been patiently waiting, scrolling through Realtor.com and Zillow. As rates have lowered, more people have started to buy homes and more sellers have been able to raise their prices because of that increase in demand. In other words, the prices of homes are remaining high yet somehow still sell. That kind of market is best known as a sellers market.

The one thing I see for buying now as an incentive while interest rates are high, is that you can always refinance down the road. Some mortgage companies offer little to no cost to refinance, while other mortgage companies offer forgivable down payment assistance. On the other hand, if you wait to buy and home prices go up, you're likely stuck with the higher prices.

As your local realtor and family friend I am always willing to speak with



Courtesy photo

local Norteños about your options and if purchasing is the right choice for you. As a golden rule, you should only buy a house if you're prepared financially. How do you know if you're financially ready to buy a house? Let's break it down.

First thing to ask yourself is are you emotionally ready? Even if it's just going to be your "starter" home, you're making a huge financial and life-altering decision and putting some roots down. You'll want to think about your other life goals for the next few years. Will you be buying with a partner? If yes, are you both on the same page when it comes to money? Is there any chance you'd need to relocate in the near future? Are you thinking of starting a family? These big-picture questions can add to the pros or cons of whether this is the right

time to buy.

The next thing to ensure is that you have a strong credit score. Getting your credit score in check will increase the likelihood of obtaining a lower mortgage interest rate. Know the mortgage options for your credit score. If your credit score could use some work, it may be worth holding off on buying and seeing what you can do to build up your credit score back up. One way to do this is through regular on-time payments or keeping your credit utilization under 30 percent.

Once you've determined what you can afford, some things to keep in mind before taking the leap should include:

- Total closing costs
- Fees that might be rolled into the loan amount
- Down payment
- Earnest money deposit
- Seller credits

Buying real estate is such a big decision that it should be handled with the utmost consideration and care. Finding a local real estate agent you can trust is a big step in the right direction. Feel free to reach out to me via email at buydirt-NM@gmail.com with any questions about the market and your considerations in purchasing a home.

Farmers Market Recap and Upcoming Plans

By GAEA MCGAHEE,
QUESTA FARMERS MARKET
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Questa Farmers Market (QFM) opens for its eighth season on May 26, and will meet every Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. until early October, depending on local food production. Thank you for supporting your farmers market for many seasons!

Our mission is to support small farm, garden, and food-based businesses in northern Taos County, and youth through paid market internships and mentorship. We are a program of Localogy, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in Questa.

We organize a farmers market each Sunday during the growing season. Each season that we're able to support our local food economy is a season that adds energy to small-scale agriculture and celebrates the communities of northern New Mexico and beyond.

Our goals are to:

- Strengthen the local food economy
- Maintain a beautiful marketplace with



Courtesy photo

Some of the 2023 market interns and mentors pose with Cucui at last October's Cambalache

- educational gardens
- Offer paid youth internships and adult mentorship positions
- Distribute local food through the North Central Food Pantry
- Irrigate gardens and trees at the market, keeping water rights in beneficial use
- Participate in SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks, supporting equitable

access to local food

2023 Season Highlights

In 2023, our youth interns and their mentors worked in visible and impactful roles at the farmers market, and in the local food system broadly at Cerro Vista Farm and the North Central Food Pantry.

We hired 20 teenagers and five adult mentors during last season. At the Sunday markets, mentor and intern teams made pizzas in the horno, ran a coffee stand, and Interns worked in vendor booths selling produce, baked goods, Frito pies, and more.

Our market accepts SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB), a food benefit program that uses tokens at the market for food purchases, and tracks these exchanges. Our interns helped distribute tokens, worked with vendors, and tracked all vendors' economic data every week.

Mentors, interns, and volunteers maintained the gardens at the market

QFM RECAP cont'd on page 13

La Cienega Gymnasium and Cafeteria Transitioning to Senior Center

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Questa's former elementary school will be seeing big changes in the coming months. According to a press release from the village, the Village of Questa began working in 2023 to determine the viability of the La Cienega Elementary School building, which has sat abandoned for several years. The village wanted to get a full understanding of the viability of the property to ascertain if the structures could be repurposed, therefore they conducted several viability studies over the past year.

The main section of the school building was found to have high levels of asbestos, mold, and lead paint. Additionally, the building's foundation is collapsing in certain sections, including the walls and roof. The cafeteria and gymnasium were both found to be viable, however repairs to rehabilitate the buildings will be costly. The village has reportedly paid \$43,000 to determine the viability of the property.

The village held three public meetings in May of 2023, soliciting feedback from the community to understand what residents would want to see for the facility. Although the village saw minimal public participation, this didn't hinder their plans to move forward applying for funds to assist with the remediation and construction plans for the property.

Village leadership is proud to announce that the State Department of Aging and Long-Term Services has awarded \$700,000 in funding to help the Village of Questa with the project. The funding will be utilized to remove the old school buildings that have fallen into extreme disrepair over many years of neglect, while replacing and upgrading the deteriorated infrastructure for the rest of the property.

Current plans for the cafeteria include a senior center and the gym is being



Courtesy photo

Renovation plans for La Cienega gym and cafeteria in Questa



Courtesy photo

proposed as a multipurpose facility. Possibilities for the property include upgraded landscaping, an outdoor gathering space, a small amphitheater, meeting facilities, recreation room, an emergency evacuation center, kitchen area, laundry room facilities, exercise stations and walking trails designed especially for our senior residents.

"The demolition will remediate and abate the hazardous materials and dispose of the materials in accordance with EPA

guidelines. This will ensure a clean and useful environment to be developed into a beautiful senior citizen multi-use facility," stated Public Information Officer for the Village of Questa Jacob LaFore.

"The Mayor and Council recognize that community members have precious memories of the La Cienega School property and we wish that the entire facility could have been salvaged. However, to ensure the safety of our seniors



Courtesy photo

and our community, necessary, difficult and decisive decisions needed to be made. The Village is grateful that the 'jewel' of La Cienega—the gym and the cafeteria—will serve the community and seniors for years to come," LaFore continued.

"This building is personal to myself and many of our village council members. My mom taught here as did several other members' parents. Our grandparents went to school here. Seeing that we can transition this property and portions of the building into something that can be used by our community is a big win for Questa," Village Mayor John Ortega says. The mayor reiterates that the cafeteria and gymnasium are safe and contain no asbestos.

To view the La Cienega Gym Feasibility Report and the KEERS remediation environmental survey reports, please go to www.questa-nm.com and click on the links provided on the homepage.

If you have any questions regarding this project or any other upcoming projects within the Village of Questa, please contact the Village of Questa's Public Information Officer Jacob LaFore at (575) 586-0694 or email him at jlafore@villageofquesta.org.

See page 16 to hear from locals who are passionate about this project.

CERRO VISTA FARM cont'd from page 4

Farmers Market, the local non-profit Localogy, along with other potential participants in hopes of developing educational programs for community youth.

Carmona recalls that before roads were paved, most every family knew how to farm for themselves and did so. With the advent of stocked supermarkets in the

Taos area that began in 1958, communities rapidly became dependent on purchasing foods shipped in from other locations. "With climate change and rapidly changing economies, potential supply chain challenges similar to what took place during the Covid pandemic, it is even more important to nurture future local farmers, offering this vital opportunity to learn the craft of farming, lest the practice be lost."

Moving forward, Carmona highlights that during both good and challenging times, the farm would not exist if it were not for the many wonderful community members who have operated as customers and work-traders, many of whom have offered their time for years, many of whom he now calls friends. "It is for them and the community—that keeps us in the game."

For 2024, the fields at Cerro Vista Farm are resting with cover crops, in

preparation for what the future may bring in terms of increased community involvement and potential new business incubation.

Meanwhile, you can purchase plant starts from their flagship business, Sunshine Seedlings, which is offering a wide selection of over 50 varieties of vegetable, herb and flower seedlings for your personal gardens. Seedlings can be pre-ordered now at their website cerrovistafarm.com.



Outstanding Youth Report: Esperanza Quintana

By STAFF WRITERS

Esperanza Quintana was nominated for our April Outstanding Youth Report. Quintana is 19 years old and is currently finishing her senior year as a homeschooler through the Elizabeth Seton homeschooling.

According to her mom, she is outgoing and loves to hike, crochet, play guitar, and paint. She loves to be around friends and help her grandparents out with household chores. Quintana has a big heart and loves to be there to support everyone in the community. She volunteered at the Questa library for their summer reading program.

She loves to write and enjoys writing school reports. She is well-spoken in front of people in public settings.

She is working her way toward her academic diploma, which is one step higher than a general diploma.



Courtesy photo



Jesse Rael

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Being raised in a community where your history connects to every part of your present, it's difficult to find the courage to leave. It is similarly difficult to forge a path and stay.

Questa del Rio News is committed to highlighting different members of our community, both those who have created their paths and planted their own roots in the community that raised them, and also those who have pursued lives outside of the community — through our Representando series. This series is dedicated to those who are Representando al Norte in various facets of life.

For our April issue, we spoke with Dr. Jesse Rael who is currently a radiologist at Sutter Medical Group of the Redwoods in Santa Rosa, California. Jesse is a proud Questeño who shared that he continues to carry his heritage, traditions, and culture with him to this day.

Jesse graduated from Questa High School in 1976. After high school he attended New Mexico Tech where he got a Bachelor of Science in chemistry. In 1985, he got his medical degree (MD) from the University of New Mexico.

After medical school, he started a surgery residency at LSU Shreveport. After three years he decided that surgery wasn't what he wanted to do and begin training in radiology. After completing his radiology training at UNC-Chapel Hill, Jesse moved back to New Mexico and started a combined neuro-interventional radiology fellowship at UNM.

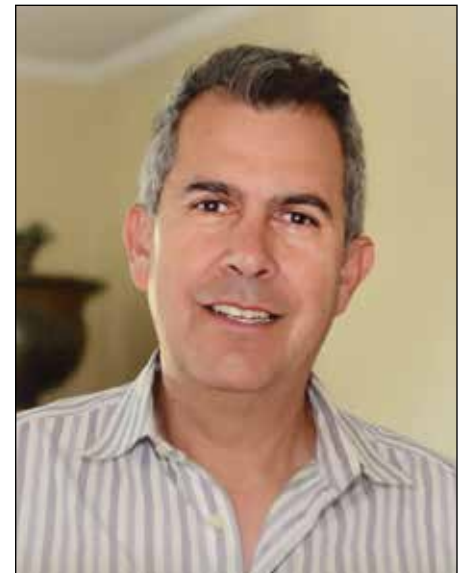
After all his training, he worked in New Mexico at UNM, Lovelace Hospital, and at the New Mexico Cancer Center.

Around 2000, while attending a sponsored dinner at a radiology conference in Chicago, he sat directly across from a woman who turned out to be a radiologist at UC Irvine. They hit it

off and had a long distance relationship for over a year. They eventually got married and started a family and have been practicing radiology together for over 26 years. Currently, Jesse and Linda are radiologists at Sutter in Santa Rosa, California.

They have two children: their oldest daughter Erin attended NYU and got her degree in Epidemiology and Public Health. She currently works at UNM where she is a stroke research coordinator. Her goal is to become a doctor. Their son, Vlad, loves everything to do with the ocean and is studying marine science at the University of Hawaii.

When asked what fed his ambition to pursue his life in medicine, Jesse says his upbringing in Questa was a big driver. "My dad worked at the Questa Mine and I grew up thinking I was destined to be a miner as well. But after seeing how hard he worked and how he always worried about job security I decided I needed to do something else. While in high school, I had the great fortune of meeting Dr. Grossman, our community doctor who introduced me to medicine and told me that even Questa kids like me could become doctors. That was a huge revelation and from then on I knew that's what I wanted to do."



Courtesy photo

Asking what advice he would give to students who may have a big goal or dream to pursue medicine, he says "I don't consider myself particularly gifted and becoming a physician took every ounce of determination that I had. I grew up in our little town of Questa, and worked hard at becoming a physician. You can become one too if you want it bad enough."

For the record, Jesse says he believes in ghosts.

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Questa Girls' Team Makes it to State Tournament

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Questa Ladycats basketball team had a stellar season on the court. Led by Coach Steve Rael, they had a winning season with a 19-11 record.

The girls traveled to Laguna Acoma to play the Lady Hawks on March 8 for the first round of the state tournament. They had a rough first three quarters, and entered the fourth quarter at 23 to 38. They fought their way back up to close the gap but came up short, ending the first round of the state tournament 46 to 40, with the Hawks taking the win.

Leaders on the Ladycats team include sophomore Alyse Lovato, with an average of 13.1 points per game and 4.2 rebounds per game. Lovato also has a 2.8 steals per game average. Junior Kamryn Cardenas is another strong team leader, averaging 2.6 assists per game, and 8.4 points per game. Cardenas also has an impressive 41 percent field goal average. Junior Aaliyah Santistevan leads the boards as well with 8.5 points per game. She also has a 34 percent field goal average. Finally, Junior Aliana Gonzalez shows strength with a 40 percent field goal average.

Franks Eats and Sweets hosted a congratulatory pizza party for the girls for all their hard work in making it to the state playoffs. His social media post reads, "Frank's Eats and Sweets staff along with Chris Tafoya and Shamrock were able to give Coach Rael and the amazing Ladycats a pizza party for their hard work and dedication making it to the 1st round of the STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT 2023-24 Season. And we're cheering you on to bring the 1st LADYCATS STATE TROPHY NEXT YEAR TO QUESTA."



Courtesy Photo

Above two photos: Ladycats in action as they play Penasco Panthers



Courtesy Photo

Ladycats enjoy a pizza party at Frank's Eats and Treats in Questa



Courtesy Photo

Ladycats team photo

COMING UP: QUESTA CHEER TEAM HEADS TO STATE

The 4x state championship Questa Wildcat Cheer squad will participate in the 2024 Spirit State Championship at the PIT on Saturday, April 6 at 5:28 p.m. for the Game Day Competition and at 7:18 p.m. for the Cheer with Music Competition.

Tickets to get into the PIT are \$12 for adults and \$7 for students K-12, military and seniors 65+.

QISD Likely to Move to 180-day School Year

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

The Questa Independent School District (QISD) Board discussed a rule change from the state's Public Education Department (PED), expressing dismay over the apparent lack of local control over public education, at the March 18 meeting.

The New Mexico PED is overhauling the state's public schools with a new requirement of 180 instructional days, starting with the 2024-25 academic year.

According to QISD Superintendent John Maldonado, Questa schools will be able to stay on their current 150-day academic year if there is a 15 percent increase in test scores, but said that the goal set by the state is unrealistic.

Read more from the NM PED here: <https://nmeducation.org/overhauling-high-school-graduation-requirements/>

One can find statements from state legislators claiming that this overhaul

will improve local control over education, but school board members as well as teachers at the March board meeting expressed their discontent with the state.

The overhaul from PED is in response to a bill that passed through both houses of the NM Legislature this year, House Bill 171. It passed the NM House 57-1 and the NM Senate 40-0. It was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham on February 9.

Read NM HB 171 here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Legislation/Legislation?Chamber=H&Leg- Type=B&LegNo=171&year=24>

The new 180-day calendar would force QISD into a 5-day school week, despite the district approving a 4-day school week last year, which was subsequently approved by the NM PED.

Read more about our coverage here: <https://questanews.com/questa-rescinds-calendar-decision-approves-new-calendar/>

Recognition For Years Of Service: Santana Santistevan

By STAFF WRITERS

For our April issue, we are recognizing teacher Santana Santistevan for her years of service as a teacher.

How long have you been teaching? Tell us where you've taught?

I have been teaching for 24 years. I have five years at Taos Middle School and 19 years with Questa. Of the 19 years in Questa, I have five years at Alta Vista, where I taught second grade for two years, and fourth to sixth grade for three years. In 2010, I was transferred to the high school to take over as librarian when Mrs. Bucanan retired. Of the 14 years that I have been at the high school, I have been able to work with so many kids in a variety of classes. I currently teach Health, Driver's Ed., Yearbook, and I monitor our UNM dual-credit students as well as our credit recovery program. I also am the sponsor for the National Jr./Sr. Honor Society and have sponsored several classes throughout the years.

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Teaching is in my blood. My dad was a teacher and administrator for Taos



Courtesy photo

most of his career. As a kid, I loved that he was on my same schedule and always was able to help me with my schoolwork and I wanted that for my own children.

What's the most fulfilling and rewarding part of teaching?

Besides the fact that I truly enjoy coming to work every day, I enjoy working with kids. We really have some great students in our school, and I love getting to know them. I love that kids will always stop by to say hi throughout the day and many have come back to see me after they have graduated. Because I'm primarily an electives teacher and

librarian, I get the opportunity to see the kids in a more relaxed setting.

We see you often work to support the students in their extracurricular activities.

Tell us more about this? Why do you think it's important?

I find extracurricular activities vital, as it allows students to find something they are interested in. Once they find something they enjoy, it gives them the opportunities to develop a variety of skills outside of the classroom. Questa might be a small community, yet our schools offer so many different opportunities that as a parent, I find myself non-stop. I have three kids, all who are in multiple sports, mariachi and the honor society. My husband and I seem to be at an event at least every other day! As mentioned earlier, I am the sponsor for Honor Society, and part of their requirement for membership is service to their community. My students have been able to make new connections within their community as they work at the food pantry, get people to come in and donate blood, serve at the community dinner, or any of the many hours they put back into our village. My goal is to help them

develop a sense of community and civic responsibility, as these kids will be our future leaders.

What is your message to other students who may want to become teachers?

If you're passionate about a certain subject and enjoy working with children or young adults, teaching may be the perfect career for you. It's a rewarding career that can make a real difference in the lives of your students. There is always a need for teachers. If you look at our current teachers, most of us will be retiring soon, so there's no better time than now to start looking into it.

Anything else you want to add about your journey?

As teachers, parents, grandparents and community members, it's up to us to instill the values of a good education in our youth and support them in all that they do. Education is the key to success, and it's important to make sure our children have the tools they need to succeed. Questa Independent Schools is a good place to be. As an employee, we have the support of our administration and as a parent, I know my kids are getting everything they need to be successful.



Math Night

By CONTRIBUTING WRITER
SAVANNAH SEGURA

Alta Vista Elementary and Intermediate School held a math night for students and their families on Monday, March 4. The theme was "100 days brighter," in celebration of the 100th day of school. Interactive activities based upon math concepts included money counting, estimation, probability, and basic counting. Hot dogs and snacks were also part of the event, provided free of charge.

The LOR Foundation was present, with a booth in support of Alta Vista, helping to continue building

strong bonds between the community and QISD.

Alta Vista staff is committed to bringing more engagement activities each month to the district and hopes to continue building a strong relationship with the community and the families it serves. We hope to see more families come out and enjoy the next event, which will be a literacy night.

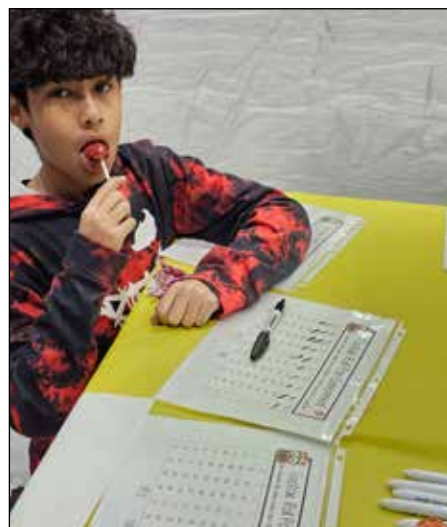


Photo By John Walsh

Student participating in multisensory math activity: Tootsie Roll Pop experiment



Photo By John Walsh

"Race to a Dollar" math game



Photo By John Walsh

Students engage in counting through fun activities!



Courtesy Photo

Alta Vista practices fire safety



Courtesy Photo

Alta Vista celebrated "Cat in the Hat" week in March!

Community Earth Day Celebration April 22

By CONTRIBUTING WRITER
CLAIRE COTÉ

On Monday, April 22, Earth Day, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., all community members are invited to join Questa Junior-Senior Honor Society students, LEAP (Land, Experience and Art of Place), and Taos County solid waste department members for a community-wide clean-up and beautification effort.

All are invited! Let's come together in solidarity with thousands of other communities around the world to celebrate Earth Day and community connection.

The day will include trash pickup in the center of town and around Eagle Rock Lake, led by the Questa Junior-Senior High School Honor Society and Taos County Solid Waste folks. At the Questa Municipal Park there will be trash pick-up, invasive plant species removal, irrigation repair, and more, led by LEAP.

Cleaning and beautifying is our goal, but equally important is staying safe, having fun, strengthening friendships, and coming together to shape the collective future vision we want for our community. The Earth Day clean-up is also in solidarity with the Village of Questa beautification committee's efforts; they host regular monthly cleanup days, which have started again



Photo Courtesy of Claire Coté

Community member Nancy Parker and Questa Honor Society students cleaning up the Questa Park in honor of Earth Day in 2023

with the return of warmer weather.

Bring a water bottle, a hat and sun protection, and if you have them—work gloves, and yard cleaning tools. Wear layers for changing weather. We will have additional tools and trash clean-up supplies on hand as well.

The first Earth Day was celebrated 54 years ago on April 22, 1970. This holiday was created by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, to mark the importance of keeping our planet healthy and clean, and for people to renew their

commitment to make positive changes in their communities.

Community Connection Days are collaborative, intergenerational days of community give-back and celebration in and around Questa, initiated by LEAP and collaborators in 2021. Each gathering is an opportunity to connect with friends and make new ones, to care for and improve our public spaces and envision together what we want for our community.

This effort is made possible by col-

laborators: Questa Junior-Senior High School Honor Society, Taos County solid waste department, LEAP, Village of Questa, Localogy, and community volunteers. LEAP's clean-up and beautification efforts at the Questa Municipal Park is funded by Chevron Grants for Good through Taos Community Foundation, as well as individual donors.

We look forward to beautifying Questa with you on Monday, April 22! Thanks to everyone involved for making this community effort possible. Next month, join in the May Community Connection Day in downtown Questa to prepare for the Memorial Day holiday opening of the Questa Farmers Market, Questa Visitor Center, in the Village Center.

What: Earth Day Clean-Up and Beautification

Where: Questa Municipal Park, Eagle Rock Lake; Questa Village Center

When: Monday April 22, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Who: Everyone welcome!

Cost: Free

Info: Santana Santistevan, Questa Junior-Senior High School Honor Society, (575) 779-5601

Claire Coté, LEAP, (575) 224-9066,

www.LEAPsite.org

ACEQUIA CLEANING DAYS

Cabresto Irrigation Community Ditch Association in Questa: members are asked to meet at the St. Anthony's Parish Center.

- Saturday, April 6 at 8 a.m.
- Saturday, April 13 at 8 a.m.

Questa Citizens Ditch Association in Questa: locations to meet are listed.

- North Ditch: Saturday, April 13 at 8 a.m. at the Ranger Station
- South & Molino Ditch: Saturday, April 20 at 8 a.m. at the Family Dollar parking lot
- Middle Ditch: Saturday, April 27 at 8 a.m. at the Family Dollar parking lot

Llano Ditch Association in Questa: members are asked to meet at the north side of Phillips 66 Station.

- Saturday, April 20 at 8 a.m.

JJ Santistevan Acequia Association in Amalia:

- Saturday, April 23 after 9 a.m. annual meeting.

Cerro de Guadalupe Acequia Association in Cerro: members are asked to meet at My Tia's Cafe in Cerro.

- April 21 at 4 p.m. (annual meeting)
- April 6 - 7 and 13 - 14 starting at 8 a.m. (cleaning days)

Members are asked to bring tools, including rakes, axes, twig cutters, shovels, water, snacks, hats, and waterproof knee-high boots.



Courtesy photo

Cabresto Ditch Association Mayordomo Danny Garcia watches as his brother Norman Garcia and nephew Antonio Garcia work to clear the acequias in central Questa



Parvovirus: Understanding The Threat

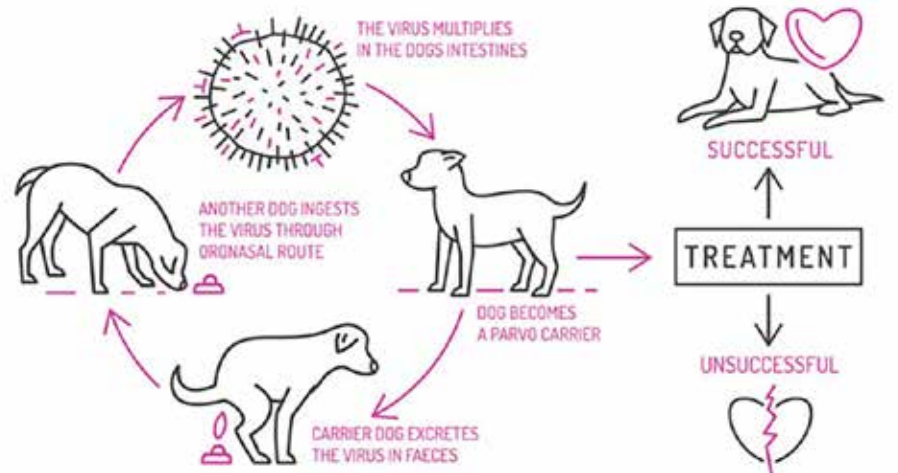
High Desert Hounds has had a busy start to 2024, with the puppy population higher than usual for this time of year. With spring here, we expect the number of unplanned litters and stray dogs having new litters to increase even more significantly. Unfortunately, an increase in population also means an increase in the risk of diseases, such as Canine Parvovirus, commonly known as "parvo," which is prevalent in Questa and the surrounding areas. It is one of the most serious

and contagious viruses dogs can get, and puppies are especially susceptible.

Parvovirus can survive for weeks, months, or even years on surfaces that are invisible to the human eye. Spring is a particularly dangerous time as it can live in our soil for an extended period without a host. Rain and snowmelt tend to bring it to the surface. It is a challenging virus to kill, highly infectious, and it carries a high mortality rate. However, it IS preventable, with proper precautions and vaccinations.

The best way to prevent parvo is to get puppies started on vaccinations as soon as they are 6 to 8 weeks old. Puppies should only socialize with fully vaccinated dogs until they can be fully vaccinated themselves. It is wise to avoid areas where unvaccinated puppies and dogs have been, including parks and public areas where many dogs visit or are known to roam. The most common symptoms of parvo are lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and dehydration. The quicker a puppy is tested and receives

THE LIFE CYCLE OF CANINE PARVOVIRUS



treatment if showing any of these symptoms, the better chance they have.

High Desert Hounds is excited to get out into the community to spread awareness about this life-threatening and avoidable disease. If you encounter dogs or puppies showing symptoms, isolate them from other animals and contact a veterinarian's office immediately. It is important to note that humans cannot get

this disease from dogs, but it can live on your clothing, hands, and shoes and be passed to other animals in your household without proper decontamination. If you need assistance in obtaining medical care or additional information, please contact High Desert Hounds at (469) 644-8323, or HighDesertHoundsTaos@gmail.com or through our website at www.HighDesertHounds.Org.

Fundraiser For Taos Animal Shelter In April

By STAFF WRITERS

The Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary (TMAS) has been a leading advocate for animal welfare since 2022. A fundraising event, "A Night of Compassion and Hope," will be held on Tuesday, April 16, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. in partnership with Chef Cristina Martinez of El Monte Sagrado. The event, billed as an appetizers and enchilada dinner, includes live music presented by Angela Pope, Arianna Solare, and Laguna Monta, and will raise money for at-risk animals now being housed at the Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary and across Taos County.

"Our goal remains to provide safety and long-term rehabilitation for the underserved, homeless, and neglected animal population. We work with other shelters and rescuers with a primary focus on the rehabilitation of fearful, at-risk animals," said officials for TMAS. "The Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary also receives animals in emergent situations, such as the many who have been abused, abandoned, and/or with special needs. When possible, our goal is to re-house; however, some animals face overwhelming obstacles prior to finding a home. For



Courtesy photo

some, TMAS is a crucial halfway house; for others, it will be their lifelong home."

In response to the escalating homeless animal crisis, TMAS has expanded operations and joined forces with the group, Run Around Dog Town in Costilla, now renamed Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary Costilla. This brings a larger team and an expanded capacity for animal intake.

It is important to note: TMAS is one of the few non-profits in Taos County (and sometimes the only option) with an open facility, actively admitting cats and dogs under emergency circumstances, along with their ability to provide long-term care for not-so-easily-adopted animals. In fact, TMAS is the only non-profit organization currently taking in animals directly from Taos County.

The agency is hopeful that the com-

munity will support their fundraiser to ensure TMAS will be able to continue taking in these at-risk animals, expand their behavioral program, host community support efforts such as free spay/neuter/vaccination clinics, and build thriving volunteer foster, transfer, and adoption programs—all of which helps more animals during this crisis.

"Please come join us for an evening of delicious food, great music, and amazing people at El Monte Sagrado. Meet the team, our board members and some of the most generous people and kind neighbors from Taos and the surrounding areas," say officials from TMAS. Tickets can be purchased at www.taosmesaanimalsanctuary.org.

Fundraiser for the Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary

When: Tuesday, April 16
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Where: El Monte Sagrado
317 Kit carson Rd
Taos, NM 87571

Tickets: \$80 Per Person
Purchase online at
TaosMesaAnimalSanctuary.org

Free Car Washes To Raise Money For Church Camp

By STAFF WRITERS

Freedom Center Church will be hosting two car washes on May 4 and May 18, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, to raise funds for their youth to go to Kids Church Camp. The washes don't have a cost associated with them, however, donations are highly encouraged to help the kids reach their goal of attending church camp. The church is located at 2558 NM-522, in Questa, and the car washes will be held there.

If you'd like to make donations to help the students reach their fundraising goals, reach out to Pastor Kristi Gonzales at (575) 770-1714 or kristi@freedomquesta.com



Courtesy photo

Youth participating at 2023 Freedom Church car wash

Mayor Ortega Talks Big Plans for Questa

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Mayor John Anthony Ortega delivered a "State of The Village" address on the first of April and talked about big plans that his administration has for Questa communities from infrastructure work and water systems to sewer lines, library expansions, and green hydrogen. The Council Chambers was full of people in anticipation of the Mayor's address.

"The reason that we did this tonight is because April 1 marks two milestones," Mayor Ortega began. "Two years ago I was sworn in as the Mayor, Councilwoman [Louise] Gallegos was sworn in to her fifth term on the Council, Councilman Jason Gonzalez was sworn in to his first, and Councilwoman Katrina Gonaes was sworn in to the remainder of my term. Next, today is the day one year ago, which we brought the Questa Police Department back to the Village."

The recognition of the QPD's revival brought applause from the audience. It was also a key campaign issue for Mayor Ortega when he ran for the office in 2021. The Village now has three certified police officers.

"Traffic is no longer going 75 mph through town unless they're the police chasing somebody chasing somebody like they were two nights ago," chuckled the Mayor in reference to a high-speed chase through Questa last week. "There

was somebody on the run from Taos, Taos County Sheriff's Department was chasing them down, [Officer Travis Wilder] was able to stop that person. That person had been wanted for a few days in Taos and was doing some bad things there."

Mayor Ortega continued with some data points from the Questa Police Department in 2023.

- 22 arrests for narcotics, domestic violence, and other felonies and misdemeanors.
- 600 traffic stops.
- 11 arrests for DWI's.

"I think those are pretty good numbers for a year," said the Mayor. "I know everything isn't perfect, I know we still have our problems but we're working on it."

Mayor Ortega hopes to encourage everyone to do their part in helping the police by staying vigilant and calling to report any potentially suspicious or criminal activity at their non-emergency line at (575) 586-1196 or (575) 586-0787. Any urgent or emergent incidents should be reported by dialing 911.

"We can't expect our officers to arrest criminals if they don't have the calls coming into them," urged the Mayor. "Please call and report it. . . I have not had a single complaint from anyone about our officers not responding to a call yet. . . If you call and report it, they will show up."

The Mayor then moved on to Questa

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) who responded to 603 calls in 2023. As of March 25 of this year they have responded to 143 calls.

"Those are record numbers for our Fire and EMS Department," said the Mayor.

Questa Fire and EMS cover an area from Amalia in the north, San Cristobal in the south, and the old Chevron mine in the east; they also serve on-call with agencies in the Town of Red River as well as Taos County.

He then spoke about the public library.

"The Questa Library [in 2023] had 5,907 patron visits.

Applause from the audience.

"I'm always impressed that a small town like Questa can have the library that we do," said the Mayor. "And that is due to the hard work of Sharon [Nicholson] and her staff."

Last year, the Questa Library was open for a total of 1,629 hours, issued 88 new library cards, and logged about 189 volunteer hours.

The next topic was the Questa Utilities Department.

"We have 4 people in our Utilities Department," said the Mayor, "and they work very hard doing water, sewer, airport, weeds, we have a good staff out there." The Mayor understands that roads throughout Questa are not the best but wants to assure everyone that the Utilities staff is doing

all they can to maintain our roads the best they can.

One significant accomplishment of Mayor Ortega's administration is the deal with New Mexico's Office of the State Engineer (OSE) to forgive the water debt that the Village owed due to an over-divergence of water from our wells.

Read about the Village's water debt forgiveness here:

<https://questanews.com/village-of-questa-potential-6-million-deficit-wiped-to-zero/>

Instead of paying the water debt in full, the OSE retroactively credited the Village with the amount of water that has been returning to the Red River via Chevron's water treatment. The Village continues to work with Chevron to procure more water rights.

Mayor Ortega then moved on to the final topic, projects and infrastructure.

Village Clerk Valerie Vigil and Village Project Manager Jake Lafore helped to secure a \$50,000 grant for a new comprehensive plan which will be getting started this month and hopefully done by the fall season.

The Village received \$40,000 in capital outlay last year for a skate park for our youth which will be enough for the planning and design phase. The Village is

MAYOR'S BIG PLANS cont'd on page 14



VILLAGE VOICE

Village of Questa Praised for Financial Strength

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Independent Auditor DeAun Willoughby made a presentation to the Village of Questa Council during the February 27 meeting, by video call. Willoughby expressed praise for the village's strong financial health. Willoughby explained to the Coun-

cil that the Village had a total of \$2.2 million dollars in assets (as of June 30, 2023) alongside a total of \$118,000 in liabilities.

"We like to see a much larger number for total current assets than liabilities," said Willoughby. "You are a very strong municipality. Financially, you are very strong."

Questa del Rio News spoke with Mayor John Ortega separately on the topic of the village's financial health and he explained their success was due to cutting back on small administrative costs in the Village offices as well as not spending money unnecessarily.

Mayor Ortega told Questa del Rio News that he is optimistic for the Village of Questa in the coming years, with our strong budget, the green hydrogen project, the construction of a new water well at the Business Park, and an updated water treatment plant. Questa has prospects and we are on track to move past our reputation as a mining town.

Questa Village Council Seeks Funding Extension Requests For Road Projects

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

Planning and design for the Cabresto Road's second phase has been completed. Phase three is fully funded. According to Village of Questa Project Manager Jake Lafore, there is approximately \$502,388 on hand for Cabresto Road's phase two, about \$270,000 of which will go to culverts and drainage for phases two and three.

"We're short just a little over a million dollars to fully fund Cabresto Road phase two," said Project Manager Lafore at the February 27 Council meeting.

The Village is requesting an extension of funds in the form of \$124,444 from the New Mexico Department of

Transportation (DoT) for Cabresto Road project's phase two.

The Village also requested an extension of funds for Embargo Road in the form of \$155,520, partly for planning and design. The Village estimates planning and design for the Embargo Road project will be completed by the end of spring to early summer of this year.

These extensions for the Cabresto Road and Embargo Road projects will be in addition to other means of funding that the Village will be seeking.

A procurement for Embargo Road bridge and an MOU for the Questa Business Bridge library project were tabled due to human errors on this meeting's agenda.

QFM RECAP cont'd from page 5

and planted a garden nearby, at Casas de Cultura, a Locality project under the stewardship of artist and educator Scott Sutton.

Questa Stories

We offer thanks to QuestaStories.org—to Claire Coté and all of the storytellers who have contributed to the archive. We heard short stories at the market by tuning into story boxes. These stories are available online at QuestaStories.org and are collected under Voices de Aquí. Questa Stories is supporting individual, community, and cultural connection, facilitating understanding and resiliency through audio-visual story gathering and sharing. We look forward to hearing more from the communities of northern Taos County and southern Colorado this season.

2023 Economic Impact for QFM Vendors

QFM is an economic focal point, helping connect communities and visitors to local food, as well as showcase local music and talent. A farmers market helps us invest locally and strengthen our roots, rather than sending money elsewhere.

A shared source of wealth is hard to measure. One thing that we do is to measure and report annually on the economic value of the season. Our vendors earned \$66,448 in 2023. On average there were 12 vendors and 300 customers each Sunday between the end of May through early October. This total includes: \$26,595 in raw agricultural products (fruit/veg, eggs, honey); \$32,817 in processed food (hot food, baked goods, pickles, preserves); and \$7,036 in art and craft (handmade items, soaps). These exchanges and material support strengthen communal ties. Congratulations to our vendors on their hard work!

Food Benefit Programs

More than ever, growing the local food system is up to all of us. You can find details about becoming a vendor on our website, at questafarmersmarket.org/for-vendors/.

To be able to offer SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks, at least 50 percent of what we sell must be raw farm goods/unprocessed local foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, eggs, meat, cheese). Local means grown within 100 miles of the market.

Vendors may also sell local prepared foods (SNAP-eligible) and value-added farm goods, and a very small percentage of handmade items or products, like

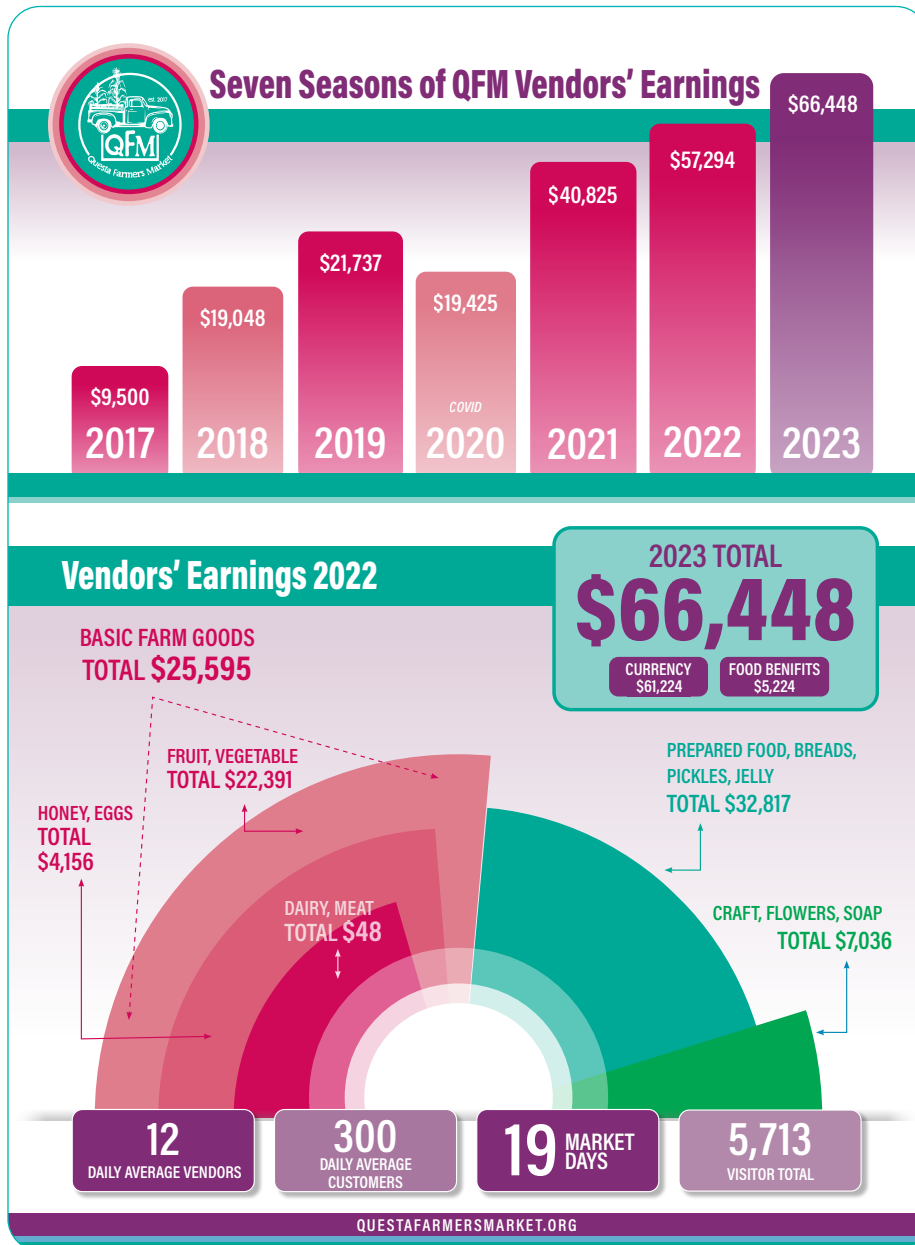


Photo by Gaia McGahee

QFM Intern Amelia Hardy helps alongside other community members, adding local produce to clients' boxes at the NCFP distribution in October 2023

the LOR Foundation, Taos Community Foundation, Chevron Grants for Good, the LANL Foundation, and through the work of community members and visiting volunteer groups. A Taos County American Rescue Plan Act Grant, awarded through TCF, was instrumental last season.

We've worked with Vida del Norte Coalition, Questa Stories, Questa Creative Council, Living Word Ministries, and other community nonprofits and individuals. Our program grows and adapts each year with the input of community voices. Thank you, all!

salve and soap.

If you have SNAP benefits, you receive Double Up Food Bucks automatically when you use your EBT card at the market. When you take out an amount from your SNAP/EBT, for example, \$20, you'll get another \$20 to spend on local fruits and vegetables, doubling your money.

Partners and Funding

We're glad to have the opportunity to grow gardens and trees and create an inviting environment. The Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF) owns the market site's land. The on-site

shipping container, donated by Questa Credit Union, has been invaluable to our program and for storing our garden tools. Over the years, we've built infrastructure (shelters, the horno, a dance floor); these improvements were possible with the financial support of the QEDF,

*Are you a farmer or gardener?
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Contact

We are a program of the local non-profit, Locality www.localogy.org To contact us, call (575) 224-2102 or email growersmakers@gmail.com

Our website:
QuestaFarmersMarket.org
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LOR Helps Questa Students

In Questa, youth sports are a big deal. Wildcat and Ladycat games are unifying, bringing together not just families and friends, but the entire Questa community. For players, football, basketball, and

soccer games are an opportunity to share talent and display their Questa pride. But all of that requires having the money to compete.

Uniforms and equipment can be expensive, and transportation to and from games adds up. And then there's costly gym and field maintenance. Administrators with the Questa Independent School District have been looking for innovative ways to make the district's sports more sustainable. Last year, superintendent John Maldonado and athletic coordinator Ernie Griego reached out to Maria Gonzalez at the LOR Foundation with an idea to capitalize on local advertising. After months of hard work and input

from local businesses, the district recently purchased a new digital scorer's table with a grant from LOR. Businesses will be able to get in front of local audiences while showing their support for local teams, while the district will be able to ensure that its athletic programs have the financial backing they need.

"Our kids deserve every opportunity to showcase their athletic abilities," Gonzalez says. "The new scorer's table is really a win-win for everybody in Questa."

Another community win is in the works for April 13, when Questa's local 4-H club will host a public tea party with first responders at the Questa Public Library. The event, which LOR is helping

to sponsor, will give residents the chance to connect with public safety officials. It will also serve as an opportunity for first responders to collect teddy bears and other stuffed animals to give to local kids when they're out on a call.

"Every project we support has passion and dedication behind it," Gonzalez says. "Some ideas just need a nudge, and that's what we're here for."

As spring starts making an appearance, Gonzalez hopes even more ideas from locals will blossom. Share your idea and learn more about how LOR can help make Questa an even better place to live by contacting Gonzalez at maria@lorfoundation.org or (575) 665-2001.

Questa Achievers Host Teddy Bear Picnic And Tea Party

By STAFF WRITERS

The Questa Achievers 4-H group is hosting a Teddy Bear Picnic and Tea Party extravaganza on Saturday, April 13 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Questa Library.

With help from the LOR Foundation, they will be collecting and donating teddy bears and stuffed animals to the Questa police department and EMT services for the benefit of children in stressful situations who may be encoun-

tered by these agencies. Donations will also be made to the Red River Marshal's office and their EMTs as well as area fire departments.

The younger members of the 4-H group will enjoy bringing their own teddy bears for a picnic, complete with teddy bears' favorite foods and a reading of "The Teddy Bears' Picnic" book. Older 4-H members will get to experience a lovely tea party.

If you would like to donate a ted-

dy bear or stuffed animal, please feel free to join us. Please contact Denise Winslow-Lawrence for more information, at (575) 200-9947.

Teddy Bear Picnic & Tea Party

When: Saturday, April 13
2 PM - 4 PM

Where: Questa Public Library

Contact: Denise Winslow-Lawrence
for more information,
at (575) 200-9947.



Courtesy Photo

Beautiful ceramic teapot and teacups are ready for the picnic and tea party

Kit Carson Electric Awarded \$500,000 To Fund Green Hydrogen Project

By STAFF WRITERS

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative is getting a much needed nod of support from the U.S. Department of Energy for its Green Hydrogen Project. \$500,000 in funding for the project was announced in mid-March.

The goal of the project is to repurpose water from the shuttered Chevron molybdenum mine. The project is expected to help bring jobs to the area and will contribute to a positive economic impact.

In our past reporting, we've explained how hydrogen can be stored for longer periods of time, allowing Kit Carson to store power and utilize it during emergencies or disasters when power needs to be cut off. Energy from new local KCEC solar arrays will power a process known as electrolysis, which involves separating the hydrogen in the water molecules and "creating a clean power end-to-

end process."

The award was championed by U.S. Senators Ben Ray Lujan and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, and is part of the approved Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. Mayor John Ortega says he is tremendously grateful for this investment in the Village of Questa and is excited to see the project progress forward.

"This is truly a big idea for a small community with big needs," said KCEC CEO Luis A. Reyes, Jr. "KCEC is extremely grateful to New Mexico Senators Lujan and Heinrich and the U.S. Department of Energy for supporting our pursuit of innovative solutions to better our communities."

Ultimately, fuel cells will use the stored hydrogen to generate electricity when solar and battery storage cannot meet local power demands. The \$500,000 award follows the successful completion



Photo by E. Wilde

of a project feasibility study and preliminary engineering.

Questa Green Hydrogen Project, along with other KCEC renewable energy sources, will contribute to KCEC's goals

to be over 70 percent renewable-energy-powered by 2028, and ultimately 100 percent renewable-energy-powered as one of the cleanest energy cooperatives in the U.S.

Join The Meeting For Chevron Questa Superfund Site

By STAFF WRITERS

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, is inviting the public to attend a community meeting for the Chevron Questa Superfund site.



Photo by E. Wilde

at: www.epa.gov/superfund/chevron-questa-mine.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the VFW Post 7688, 2597 Highway 522, in Questa, New Mexico.

During the meeting, an update will be provided on current site activities and future cleanup work at the Superfund site. Following the updates, a question-and-answer session will be open to the public.

Additional site information is available at the site's local document repository, located at the Village of Questa offices at 2500 Old State Road 3, in Questa, New Mexico.

If you're interested in accessing paperwork virtually, the site profile can be found

If you have questions about this meeting, they can be directed to Nichole Foster, EPA Remedial Project Manager, at (214) 665-7248 or via email foster.nichole@epa.gov or Janetta Coats, EPA Sr. Community Involvement Coordinator, at (214) 665-7308, 1-800-533-3508 (toll-free), or via email at coats.janetta@epa.gov.

Community Meeting for the Chevron Questa Superfund Site

When: Tuesday, April 16
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Where: VFW 7688
2597 Hwy 522, Questa 87556

MAYOR'S BIG PLANS cont'd from page 12

looking to place the skate park behind the current Municipal Park.

Additionally, the project to replace the Llano Bridge on Lower Embargo Road has been fully funded for a replacement. The project to improve Shirley Drive has been fully funded.

The project for repairs to Cabres-to Road is 2/3 of the way funded. The project was designed in three phases, only two of which have been fully funded; it needs an additional \$900,000. The project for repairs to Embargo road is partially funded for planning and design and will need an additional \$2.68 million. The projects to improve Lower Embargo Road and Old Llama Road are not currently funded.

The Village has a total of \$1.8 million for new sewer lines that will go along Gallegos Road and \$350,000 for a new water well. These grant-funded projects will hopefully be done within the next two years. The Village has also hired an engineer to assess all the roads within the Village.

The Village received \$1.8 million from the Water Trust Board for a new water well. A new well will help the Village increase efficiency with water usage and will hopefully be under construction

next spring.

The Village has \$130,000 for planning and design of a new wastewater treatment facility.

The Village is planning a 3,000-4,000 square-foot expansion to the Taos Bakes building costing \$1.5 million and will hopefully be done this summer. Further improvements to the Questa Library and the Municipal Park are also in the works for this summer.

The Village is planning to rebuild the cafeteria of the old La Cienega school, converting it into a new senior center and apparently the gym can still be salvaged, but much of that old school is contaminated with asbestos and lead paint and set for demolition.

"Those are all the projects currently in the works," said the Mayor.

Future projects include animal control for which the Village currently has \$75,000 and a new fire department building for which the Village has million dollars but needs about another \$5.5 million.

The green hydrogen project is still preliminary. Mayor Ortega estimates it to be a long-term, 5-10 year project, but he assures high-paying jobs for the community when that gets off the ground.

A recording of the "State of The Village" address can be at *Questa del Rio News* Facebook page.

Prom Safety Tips

PARENTS

- Connect with other parents to stay in communication about your kids while at prom
- Talk to your kids about not drinking and doing drugs
- Plan a supervised alcohol free after-party for kids
- Set the right example for your kids

KIDS

- Be a safe passenger, don't distract the drivers of the vehicle on the way to prom
- Get ready at home, try not to be distracted getting ready in the car
- Seatbelts are the perfect accessory for your prom attire
- Don't drink and do drugs—especially not if you're driving

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Welcome!

Welcome, Dr. King Campbell!

We're excited to announce our new Dental Director, King Campbell, DDS! Dr. Campbell has over 30 years of experience in dentistry.

We are happy to be accepting new patients and look forward to serving the needs of the Questa community.

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Our Visible History

Questa is still in the throes of economic recovery. The 1930s was another period of dire recovery following the Great Depression. At that time, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an Executive Order creating the WPA, the Works Projects Administration.

More than three million unemployed Americans were put to work building over 4,000 new schools and many other public buildings, libraries, hospitals, and other public works. One of those schools was La Cienega, right here in our village.

Construction began in 1934 and the school opened in 1936. Retired history teacher Flavio Cisneros relates that before this, Questa's little kids went to a small school where the current Parish Center is located and the older kids had to take a bus up to Costilla for high school and were taught by nuns. "I started school at La Cienega at age six," he said, "in a class called 'pre-first' taught by Lucy Gonzales. Each classroom had a wood or coal-burning stove and we kids carried the fuel in from a shed behind the school."

Manuel Medina recalls playing on the basketball "A" team. "We played Taos, Espanola, Los Alamos, yeah," he smiled, "we were good." He graduated from La Cienega in 1954.

Reyna Gonzales taught there, following a family tradition; her uncles and aunt were beloved teachers also. Food Pantry co-founder Jeannie Masters



Courtesy Photo

La Cienega's past students and Teachers stand in front of main La Cienega School Building. From left to right, starting from the back: Reyna Gonzales, Tim Long, Manuel Medina, Jeannie Masters, and Flavio Cisneros



Courtesy Photo

Historical Marker, La Cienega School

remembers Reyna's aunt, Cecilia Ortega, teaching her in first grade. Flavio returned to teach there in 1982. Tim Long taught at the same time, remembering his music classes being held in "the shed," an outbuilding where returning WWII vets had learned woodworking. "My first teaching job was at La Cienega," Tim said. "The deep history embedded in those thick adobe walls is part of northern New Mexico culture that's stayed with me for the past 50 years."

It was First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt who urged the President to add a program to include workers in the arts. As our mission at the QCC is to strengthen community through arts, culture, history, and education, we are so glad of this! Many of the writings, photography, murals, and more that originated in this program are now considered part of the classic American canon. We see this every day here in Questa when we admire the historic photography on our light pole banners. These WPA-era photographs of John Collier, Jr., taken in Questa in the 1930s and '40s, are archived in the U.S. Library of Congress, which is where the Questa History Trail team found these images, and used them for trail signage. One of those photos is of a student sitting by the classroom stove, Flavio recalled.

loween Trunk-or-Treat, dusting shelves, tending plants and helping at used book sales—these are just a few of the ways you can lend a hand.

During the immediate aftermath of our mine closure, state and federal agencies held out hands to help. Ideas included the restoration of this building. Many community-strengthening uses were proposed, from a more accessible location for Ancianos and the North Central Food Pantry, a gallery for local art, and even office space for our own Questa Creative Council. The former gym and cafeteria are now being renovated for a new Senior Center (see article on page 7.)

It would be very expensive to accomplish full restoration. Though portions of the site may still be usable, and a memorial sign can inform future generations of the important role the WPA played to education in our rural community.

With the return of our Fiestas traditions, the creation of the Questa History Trail, annual Art Tour and Art Markets that show off our traditional and ongoing artistic talents, it seems like a time to preserve all we can of our unique and important history.

The 9th Annual Questa Art Tour will be held August 10 & 11 this year. Artists, your applications need to be in by May 1, with the small fee of \$60, in order to be included in the wide range of publicity and the brochure/map. Go to www.questacreative.org/about-the-tour/ where you can download applications and pay online. Or pick up the application at Rael's Coffee Shop or ArtQuesta. Don't forget; we need you and the community wants to see your art!



Membership Renewals Due

By Contributing Writer
LINDA BETZ

No (April) fooling! All Friends of the Questa Public Library (FQPL) annual membership dues are up for renewal on

Monday, April 1. To eliminate confusion over monthly renewal dates, the FQPL Board has decided to roll everyone into an annual membership cycle, beginning this April. Stop by the library now to renew your support.

With memberships starting at \$10 for individuals, library patrons and friends are given an affordable means to support the many existing and planned programs and services available to our changing community. The library's continued growth depends on dues, donations, grants, and volunteer activities to drive its success. Join other FQPL

members in this community hub for fun and friendship!

At the \$25 or more membership level, you will receive a quality FQPL bookbag, handy for special purchases at the periodic library used book sales, or for everyday use. Why not gift a membership to that person who has everything?

And, did you know that free memberships are available to volunteers donating a minimum of 10 hours of service to the library? Making reception baked goods, assisting at the summer reading program, handing out books at the Hal-

loween Trunk-or-Treat, dusting shelves, tending plants and helping at used book sales—these are just a few of the ways you can lend a hand.

Help the Friends of the Questa Public Library, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, by joining or renewing your membership today. Membership forms to accompany payment are available at the library, 6 1/2 Municipal Road in Questa, noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call (575) 586-2023.



Make Art Work

By LYNN SKALL,
Director of the Questa Economic
Development Fund

Artists of many genres gathered over the weekend of March 2 and 3 for a free business development workshop specifically targeted to the creative economy. Tenured artists as well as artist entrepreneurs received training on developing the building blocks to establish and grow a thriving arts practice.

Held in Questa at the Living Word Ministries Fellowship Hall, 28 individuals from as far away as Santa Fe attended the workshop to further develop their personal branding, strengthen and enhance their current marketing and promotional practices, and set goals for their creative businesses.

To begin the workshop, attendees



Photo by E. Wilde

Attendees work on an exercise on day two of the workshop

introduced themselves one by one, and shared a brief description of the art they call their own; photography, watercolor, bluegrass music, murals, leatherworks, plein air painting, writing, and more. It was a truly diverse and passionate group.

Chris Dahlquist, one of three facilitators for the day from the Mid-America Arts Alliance (all artists themselves), introduced the workshop by explaining, "Successful artists understand the business side. They leverage relationships and technology, set goals—they often have multiple revenue streams, and are proactive in asking for what they need."

Guided exercises were used throughout the day to galvanize these ideas. The participants were asked to change tables after each task to share their outcomes, hear one another's unique results, and connect with others in the workshop.

Dahlquist explained that before goals could be set, self-assessments needed to be completed. "Identify your assets and deficits. What activities are you good at and where do you think you could use improvement? What do you want your legacy to be, how do you want to be remembered? How do you define success? Write it down. Keep writing."

After the self-exploration assignments, the energy in the room was charged with possibilities. It was time for goal-setting. Facilitator Sarah Hearn explained, "We're writing one arts-oriented goal for each of the next three years using the "SMART" model. Your goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound. Where do you want to take your business?" Hearn emphasized that "...your goals should stretch you, and you should not be afraid to change your goals!"

Facilitator Christine West asked how

MAKE ART cont'd on page 25

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By Toner Mitchell

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Stocking Event set for April 19

It's become an institution, Questa's annual remembrance of the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout, as a bow to northern New Mexico's natural heritage. With the exception of a period during Covid, volunteers from far and wide have gathered for years at the rim trails of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument to carry plastic bags full of water and precious cargoes of baby Cutthroat Trout into the gorge for release into the river. The day is

usually in spring, the air full of birdsong and optimism. This year, the stocking will take place on Friday, April 19.

As in past years, there should be hundreds of attendees, and like last year, participants will have the options of hiking to the Rio Grande from several trailheads along the rim or, for those seeking a less strenuous adventure, stocking the Red River near Eagle Rock Lake.

Gorge participants will meet at 10 a.m. at the Wild Rivers Visitor Center, where representatives from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will provide background information on our state fish, as well as logistics for stocking the fingerlings safely and effectively. Bureau of Land Management staff will provide additional logistical information, including guidance on minimizing impact on the monument's natural resources. Eagle Rock participants will meet at the lake at 11 a.m.. If you have questions, please direct them to Coldwater Biologist from the Department of Game and Fish John Smith at john.smith@dgf.gov; (505) 469-9718.

Like most New Mexico outings, a day that's most fun is the one that's most safe. The gorge hike is a challenge to even the

heartiest individuals. Bring more water than you think you will need. Wear a wide-brimmed hat, don long sleeves and breathable pants to protect against the energy-sapping sun. Down by the riverside, soak your feet as you listen to the river churn, and if you bring fishing gear, don't forget your license.

Prepare to go as slowly as you need to, especially on the way out. Understand, however, that the fish you will be carrying are on a ticking clock, so some awareness of time will be necessary. Game and Fish staff will fill up your bag with cold, oxygenated water, drop some fish in, and give it another shot of oxygen before handing it to you. You should be ready to begin hiking at that moment, not after. Don't get your fish, return to your car for your lunch and fishing gear or rearrange your pack. Do that stuff before—get your fish and go. The quicker your trip down, the greater the chances that your trout will survive in the big river.

And in case you're wondering, the cutthroats we've put in the Rio do indeed survive. The babies we put in measure from two to four inches in length. Over the years, I have caught cutthroats in



Photo by E. Wilde

Baby Rio Grande Cutthroat trout ready for stocking from last year's event in April

the Rio as long as 14 inches, more than once. I've caught them near the Colorado state line and as far down as Pilar, which suggests that the fish stocked during these annual events have not only survived and grown but have traveled for distances of over 20 miles! This is one tough fish, if given half a chance.



BIRD IS THE WORD

By Bryce Flanagan

Conservation Wins and a Surging Bird Flu

In a major win for conservationists, the U.S. District Court for Washington, D.C. ruled against the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association and upheld the endangered status of the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

Originally declared endangered in 1995, the tiny, olive-gray bird is making a steady comeback thanks to continued efforts by conservation groups to prevent the overturning of its protections. Its current population is estimated to be around 2,500 to 3,000, compared to just 550 when they were first listed as endangered. The Pacific Legal Foundation, representing the Cattle Growers Association, argued that the birds

inhabiting their ranch lands are not a valid subspecies of the flycatcher, and thus are not deserving of protections. The Center For Biological Diversity, representing Maricopa Audubon Society, argued that ornithologists had repeatedly reaffirmed the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher since 1948, and that cattle grazing was a primary contributing factor to the destruction of its habitat.

Judge Ana C. Reyes dismissed the case with prejudice, meaning the case may not be filed again on similar grounds. Charles Babbitt, conservation chair of Maricopa Audubon Society praised the judge's decision and offered no sympathy to ranchers, saying that "protection is problematic for ranchers whose unsustainable business model requires that their cows continue to destroy the country's few surviving desert riparian areas." In a statement to Taos News, Thomas Paterson, president of the New Mexico Cattle growers Association, said the decision was "essentially allowing Fish and Wildlife to make an unchecked policy choice that negatively impacts the lives of ordinary Americans."

This year's state legislative session netted \$300 million in funding for the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, which will be distributed among state agencies to conserve and protect wildlife and habitat, maintain and expand outdoor recreation,

restore acequias, protect historic sites, and more. This is the largest investment made in conservation in New Mexico history. Tannis Fox of Conservation Voters New Mexico said this money can keep the fund sustainable "in perpetuity" and was especially needed in light of a recent Supreme Court decision, Sackett vs. EPA, which weakened the EPA's ability to protect wetlands and waterways in New Mexico.

In less uplifting news, researchers at University of New Mexico found that wildlife near Holloman Air Force Base in Alamogordo were contaminated with staggeringly high amounts of "forever chemicals": per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. UNM called these concentrations unprecedented—among the 23 species of birds and mammals studied, PFAS averaged in the tens of thousands of parts per billion. "To put this in perspective, the research team pointed out that thousands of dairy cattle in Clovis, New Mexico recently had to be destroyed because their milk was contaminated at less than six parts per billion," reads the newsroom statement from UNM. The source of contamination is thought to be from a firefighting foam first used in the 1970s that has since been phased out of use at the base. The U.S. government is currently facing thousands of lawsuits brought on by victims of PFAS contamina-

tion across the nation.

Lastly, the highly contagious strain of bird flu that caused historic poultry deaths in 2022 is showing no signs of slowing down. The flu has now spread to the Antarctic and infected penguins and cormorants (black-and-white seabirds a little smaller than geese) according to a March report from Chilean researchers. This is the first time in recorded history that avian flu (or bird flu) has infected either species. Last year, in another first, a polar bear in Alaska died from bird flu. Researchers noted that bird flu presents an especially dangerous risk to endangered species like the Emperor Penguin, as they typically move about in close crowds, exacerbating potential spread. This strain has shown an uncommon adaptability to infect mammals; 221 cases of transmission to 18 different mammalian species have been reported in the U.S. since 2022. In December of 2023 the Centers for Disease Control reported a die-off of sea lions—5,224 of them—in Peru, associated with H5N1, caused by close contact with seabirds. Fewer cases of bird flu were reported last year, likely due to increased disease-preventative measures adopted by poultry farmers. The U.S. is currently researching a vaccine, and in February Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said one should be ready "in 18 months or so."

Explore Taos County's Geological Past With Taos County Historical Society Speaker

By Contributing Writer
MICHAEL WILSON

Few would disagree that the landscape of Taos County is unusual and stunning, from shining mountains and extinct volcanic cones to deep gorges and vast llanos. How many, however, can claim familiarity with the geologic forces that have shaped the dramatically beautiful area we call home?

The Taos County Historical Society (TCHS) speaker on April 6, Dr. Deborah Ragland, will provide a tour through Taos County's geologic past, show why we have the remarkable landform features around us that we see every day, and answer those questions that have often crossed our minds.

Is seismic activity a thing of the past? No, says Dr. Ragland. While not an immediate danger, there was in fact a 3.8 magnitude earthquake near Nambé on Oct. 17, 2011. She will also give her interpretation of the reputed Taos Hum.

Dr. Ragland will speak on Saturday,



Courtesy Photo

Deborah Ragland, PhD; adjunct instructor in Geology, UNM - Taos

April 6, at 2 p.m. at the Kit Carson Electric Coop boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta in Taos.

Dr. Ragland is the adjunct instructor of geology at UNM-Taos. After growing up in Pennsylvania, she moved to Tex-



Photo by D. Ragland

Rockhounds treasure Taos County staurolites, a metamorphic mineral also known as fairy stones

as to launch her academic career at the University of Texas, Austin. She finished work on a B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in geology and environmental studies at UT, Purdue, Northern Illinois, and Oklahoma State universities. After completing her Ph.D., she worked in research and development as a senior geologist and consulting geologist in the oil industry in Oklaho-

ma and Texas.

Facing another move to Texas in 2002, Dr. Raglan semi-retired and moved to Taos where, as luck would have it, UNM-Taos needed a geology instructor. Over the past 20 years she has taught introductory, advanced, and upper division geology and climate change classes. She has co-led geology field trips in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado and written geological guides for Grand Canyon and Arches National Parks. Her classes are perennial favorites among both undergrads and adult students.

Who: Dr. Deborah Ragland, UNM-Taos instructor in geology

What: Talk on Taos County Geology 101

When: Saturday, April 6 at 2 p.m.

Where: Kit Carson Electric Coop boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta, Taos

Further info: Michael Wilson, (612) 743-6546

Well Done!

HONORING PAST & PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE ACTIVE8 YOUTH COALITION



Anastacia Gonzalez

Our first-ever youth member graduated in 2020 from Taos Academy. Anastacia has obtained her certification in massage therapy and herbal medicine and now owns a private practice in Colorado Springs. She is continuing her education in the fall with a focus in pediatric nursing.

Anastacia shares that the coalition gave her a different perspective on how alcohol and other substances can affect your body. "It's a big reason why I chose to get into holistic medicine. My goal is to incorporate holistic healing with current traditional medical standards as a doctor in the future," she says.



Angelica Lovato

Angelica graduated from Questa High School in 2022 and is currently in her second year at the University of New Mexico. She is pursuing a degree in biochemistry, with minors in Spanish and Health, Medicine, and Human Values. She is on a pre-med track, with plans to go to medical school right after she completes her undergrad. She is also a part of the 2022 cohort in the BA/MD program at UNM. "The coalition helped opened my eyes to some of my community's needs. I learned that I love giving back to people. The need for physicians in rural communities is a big reason why I am following this career path."



McKayla Martinez

McKayla graduated in 2022 from Quest High School and is currently in her second year at New Mexico State University, majoring in criminal justice and psychology.

McKayla explains that the coalition made her realize how much she likes helping people. "I really enjoy helping others especially the younger people, joining the coalition is actually what influenced what I'm majoring in now. Criminal justice gives one a chance to help your community whenever one can and really being able to make a difference."



Araceli Gonzalez

Araceli graduated from Questa High School in 2022, and is attending school at Dona Ana Community College in Las Cruces where she is majoring in Business.

Araceli wishes to use this education to become a business owner in Questa. Araceli stated that the coalition helped her to see things from a larger perspective. She explains that through the trainings that she attended with the coalition it equipped her to become a strong leader, and gave her the confidence to speak up and be more assertive.



Kalena Trujillo

Kalena graduated from Taos Academy in 2023. She has obtained a national registry license in phlebotomy, allowing her to work anywhere in the nation. Kalena currently works with Questa EMS as an EVO (emergency vehicle operator) and at Holy Cross Medical Center. Soon, she will be working at UNM-Sandoval Regional Hospital in Rio Rancho.

She plans on continuing her career in respiratory therapy. "Through the coalition, I discovered that I like to help people and can make a difference. Oftentimes, whether it be in an ambulance or in a hospital room, we are those people's shoulders to cry on or vent to. Even though it's not medical care you're still helping that patient through some of the toughest times in their life."



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Vida Del Norte Drug Free Coalition

Joint Operation Leads To Arrest

By DYLAN R.N. CRABB

A joint operation involving the Taos County Sheriff's Office, the Questa Police Department, the Costilla County Sheriff's Office, the Blanca Police Department, and the Colorado State Patrol Auto Theft Unit led to the arrest of Abundo Martinez near the New Mexico-Colorado border.

"Abundo Martinez was taken into custody by Costilla County Sheriff deputies on February 27, 2024 in San Luis and booked into the Costilla County jail on the following charges: felony theft, possession of removed, defaced, altered, or destroyed motor vehicle identification numbers, and defacing a firearm," a Costilla County Sheriff's office press release stated.

Questa del Rio News reached out to the Costilla County sheriff's office as well as the Colorado State Patrol, but they were not able to give much information, as it is an open case.



Courtesy Photo

Abundo Martinez

"I was able to speak with the sheriff's office and unfortunately they are not able to release additional info at this time," said Cale Gould with the Colorado Auto Theft Prevention Authority (CATPA). "They were able to share what the release stated, that they are in the process of identifying all the stolen equipment and vehicles and returning them to their owners in due process with the investigation. They have returned several of the vehicles."



Costilla County Sheriff's Office

February 29 at 9:18 PM · 🌐

⚠️ FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ⚠️

After a lengthy investigation by the Costilla County Sheriff's Office along with Taos NM Sheriff's Office, Questa NM PD, Blanca PD, and Colorado State Patrol Auto Theft Unit several stolen vehicles totaling an approximate value of \$50,000 along with a welder and a camper were recovered.

Abundo Martinez was taken into custody by Costilla County Sheriff Deputies on February 27th, 2024 in San Luis and booked into the Costilla County Jail on the following charges: Felony Theft, Possession of removed, defaced, altered, or destroyed motor vehicle identification numbers, and defacing a firearm.

Bond was set by the courts at \$2,500.

Judge Sentences Four Defendants in Amalia Compound Case to Life in Prison; Appeals Planned

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN,
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — A U.S. judge sentenced four family members to life in prison for convictions stemming from a federal terrorism and kidnapping case that began in 2017 with the search for a toddler who went missing from Georgia and was later found dead when authorities raided a squalid compound in northern New Mexico.

The sentencing comes months after jurors convicted the four defendants in what prosecutors had called a "sick end-of-times scheme."

The defendants were unsuccessful in their arguments that the severity of the sentences violated their constitutional rights. That will be just one of the arguments they plan to bring up when appealing their convictions. At trial, they suggested that the case was the product of "government overreach" and that they were targeted because they are Muslim.

The fifth defendant—Jany Leveille, a Haitian national—avoided being part of a three-week trial last fall by pleading guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and being in possession of a firearm while unlawfully in the United States. Under the terms of her



Courtesy photo

plea agreement, she had faced up to 17 years in prison.

Judge William Johnson sentenced her to 15 years, noting that Leveille had received treatment for a diagnosis of acute schizophrenia that followed her arrest in 2018. She had undergone competency evaluations and began taking medication.

"The facts are so horrendous. But also with Ms. Leveille, this is the first time there has been any acceptance of responsibility" among the defendants, the judge said, noting that it was significant that Leveille apologized to the toddler's

mother and to her co-defendants.

Prosecutors said during the trial that it was under Leveille's instruction that the family fled Georgia with the boy, ending up in a remote stretch of the high desert where they conducted firearms and tactical training to prepare for attacks against the government. It was tied to a belief that the boy would be resurrected and then instruct the family which corrupt government and private institutions needed to be eliminated.

Some of Leveille's writings about the plans were presented as evidence during the trial. She was described as a spiritual

leader for the group.

Leveille addressed the court Wednesday, saying it was her 41st birthday and now that she can think clearly, it sickens her to think about what happened because of her delusions and the voices she was hearing.

Prosecutors said it was unclear when Leveille's mental health issues began to manifest.

Siraj Ibn Wahhaj, the boy's father and Leveille's partner, was convicted of three terrorism-related charges. Wahhaj's brother-in-law, Lucas Morton, also was convicted of terrorism charges, conspiracy to commit kidnapping, and kidnapping that resulted in the boy's death. Wahhaj's two sisters—Hujrah and Subhanah Wahhaj—were convicted only on the kidnapping charges.

Defense attorneys for the sisters argued that a life sentence was grossly disproportionate to the crimes their clients were accused of committing and that the women had no control over the situation. Prosecutors disputed those claims.

Johnson said he was bound by the federal kidnapping statute, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of life

KIDNAPPING CASE cont'd on next page >>

Mistrial Declared In Questa Teen's Murder Trial

By LIAM EASLEY, Taos News

A jury in Taos District Court could not reach a verdict on Tuesday, March 5, after a weeklong trial for a Questa teenager charged with shooting and killing a 13-year-old girl while playing with firearms at his father's home last summer.

The jury returned to the courtroom after approximately eight hours of deliberation on Tuesday to announce they could not reach a consensus on the four counts filed against 14-year-old Porfirio Brown: second-degree murder, two third-degree counts of tampering with evidence, and one misdemeanor count of assault upon a peace officer.

An official tally found that two-thirds of the jury voted to find Brown "not guilty" on the murder charge.

Because the jury could not reach a verdict, a mistrial was declared, meaning that the 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office may refile the case in the future.

Prosecutors tried Brown as a "youthful offender," which in New Mexico means a juvenile defendant can receive an adult sentence if convicted. If the state



Photo Courtesy Taos News

Defense attorney Lizzy Bunker submits photographs at a hearing for Porfirio Brown, a 14-year-old charged with shooting and killing 13-year-old Amber Archuleta at his father's home in Questa on July 28, 2023

were to downgrade the charge to involuntary manslaughter, Brown's youthful offender status would be revoked and he would be tried as a juvenile.

On July 28 last year, Brown was arrested on suspicion of shooting and killing 13-year-old Amber Archuleta while they were playing with two other friends, including Archuleta's brother, at Brown's family home in Questa. Following Archuleta's death, the child witnesses told investigators that Brown then dragged her body outside the home to make it appear as though she had been killed in a drive-by shooting.

Following the fatal shooting, Brown's father, William Brown, became the first person in New Mexico to be charged with negligently making a firearm accessible to a minor, otherwise known as the Bennie Hargrove Law, a misdemeanor.

Brown wept as the jury announced it could not reach a verdict on the murder charge and looked back at his family, who were sitting behind him throughout the trial. Following the mistrial, he was released from custody.

<< KIDNAPPING CASE cont'd from last page

in prison when such a crime results in death. The statute dates back nearly a century to the abduction of the son of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife, Anne.

While some federal sentencing statutes have evolved over time, Johnson said a precedent has been set by the U.S. Supreme Court and circuit courts in limiting judges' discretion in such instances. Prosecutors added that there have been no federal cases in which the mandatory sentence for a deadly kidnapping case has been overturned due to questions of constitutionality.

In a complex case that took years to get to trial, jurors heard weeks of testimony from children who had lived with their parents at the compound, other family members, firearms experts, doctors and forensic technicians.

Authorities raided the family's compound in August 2018, finding 11 hungry children and dismal living conditions without running water. They also found 11 firearms and ammunition that were used at a makeshift shooting range on the property on the outskirts of Amalia near the Colora-

do state line.

The remains of Wahhaj's 3-year-old son, Abdul-Ghani Wahhaj, were found in an underground tunnel at the compound. Testimony during the trial indicated that the boy died just weeks after arriving in New Mexico and that his body was kept for months with Leveille promising the others that he would be resurrected.

An exact cause of death was never determined amid accusations that the boy, who had frequent seizures, had been deprived of crucial medication.

Abdul-Ghani's mother, Hakima Ramzi, appeared by video Wednesday and offered a tearful plea for the judge to impose the maximum sentence.

The grandfather of the boy is Muslim cleric Siraj Wahhaj, who leads a well-known New York City mosque. He stood up in court Wednesday and delivered a simple message to his children and the other defendants.

"I'm saying to you I forgive you," the elder Wahhaj said, adding that he didn't think they intended for the boy to die. "We're human beings and we make mistakes."

His daughters began to cry, and Leveille hung her head low.

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**BODY
MIND
SPIRIT**



By **BARBARA TRACY**

EARTH

Earth is a German-English word that simply means “ground.” Of course, earth means much more than that to the inhabitants living upon it. Mother Earth supports our very life existence. Just as the importance of breathing air or drinking water or getting adequate sunlight is life-sustaining, so too is contact with the earth.

Unfortunately, most earth inhabitants have lost that contact through synthetic clothes and shoes that create a disconnect to the earth. We live in buildings that create a barrier between ourselves and the energies of earth, and there are

even physical, mental, and emotional illnesses that have been created and have also increased in variety in part because we have moved away from the nature of self and forgotten the reality of the makeup of our being: earth, air, fire, and water.

The vital importance of earth’s energy is without question, and when we are lacking earth energy, conditions can arise, such as chronic lower back pain, sciatica, varicose veins, problems with the rectum, depression, immune-related disorders, bone weakness, adrenal problems, shaking, and possibly an inability to maintain balance or to walk.

When our earth element is balanced in cooperation with the other elements, we have abundance, security, prosperity, strength, and health. When our earth element is unbalanced, it can lead to fear and clinging to security, possessions, land, home, and body.

The challenge of earth energy is security/survival, the ability to take care of our basic needs, such as food, rest,

warmth, and shelter. And then we protect ourselves, our family, our home, our land and our country.

There are earth emotions that can affect our lives in many ways: they may manifest as insecurity, panic, anxiety about known and unknown things, and worry. Some people overcompensate and invest in material security but sacrifice the freedom of the flow of life. Others may talk themselves out of doing anything because they fear the worst, and thus miss opportunities. Worry and anxiety take away the joy of the present moment because we waste our energies imagining things that rarely happen.

How do we bring more peace and comfort to unbalanced earth energies? By re-establishing our connection with the earth through physical contact to the earth—this is called grounding. There are very natural ways to make that contact: take off your shoes and socks and step directly onto the earth’s surface. In order to make contact, your skin must touch the earth directly. Some

people like to lie down on the grass in a park, some go swimming in a lake, or wade in a stream. Grounding eases the tension and helps release nervous or stuck energy.

Our family is devoted to grounding and because of work schedules and such, we use grounding pads and sheets that can be purchased online. In fact, my yoga mat is grounded as well. The mats and sheets are connected to the grounding outlets in our home and provide us with the earth energies that create a very noticeable easing of aches and pains and produce a calming effect. The science of grounding has also discovered it is useful for bringing down inflammation, which is a root cause of many illnesses. You can find more information online. The company we bought from is Earthing.com and there are other companies as well. Grounding does much more than I can share with you in this abbreviated explanation, so I hope you will do your own research and make your own discoveries.

SENIOR MENU: APRIL 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Sloppy Joe, Tater Tots, Peas & Carrots, Berries	2 Chicken & Potato Burrito, Red Chili Sauce, Chuck Wagon Veggies, Fruit Cocktail in Gelatin	3 Pork Stir Fry, Fried Rice, Stir Fry Veggies, Spinach Salad, Fresh Orange	4 Meatloaf, Scalloped Potatoes, Buttered Carrots, Wheat Roll, Cinnamon Spiced Apples	5 Baked Pork Chop, Rice Pilaf, Green Beans & Corn, Wheat Roll, Fresh Cantaloupe
8 Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Mushroom Gravy, 5 Way Veggies, Wheat Roll, Tropical Fruit	9 Soft Fish Taco, Cucumber Salad, Black Beans, Spanish Slaw, Tapioca Pudding	10 Hot Roast Beef and, Swiss Sandwic, Au Jus Sauce, 3 Bean Salad, Roasted Beets, Potato Chips, Fresh Banana	11 Baked Chicken, Chicken Gravy, Wild Rice, Asparagus with Onions, Biscuit, Apricots	12 Cheese Tortellini with Meaty Marinara Sauce, Italian Veggies, Tossed Salad w/ Dressing, Wheat Roll, Oatmeal Cookie
15 Pork Posole, Chateau blend Vegetables, Flour Tortilla, Berries w/ gelatin	16 Chicken Fettuccini with Alfredo Sauce, Broccoli & Cauliflower, Wheat Roll, Fresh Pear	17 Boneless Country Style Ribs, Baked Beans, Carrot and Raisin Salad, Cornbread, Pineapple chunks	18 Green Chili Chicken Enchiladas, Pinto Beans, Yellow Squash & Zucchini, Plums	19 Turkey Cobb Salad with Boiled Egg, Ranch Dressing, Crackers, Strawberries
22 Teriyaki Chicken, White Rice, Asian Veggies, Wheat Roll, Mandarin Oranges, Fortune Cookie	23 Breaded Cod, Baked French Fries, Vegetable Medley, Cole Slaw, Lemon Sherbet	24 Pork Posole, Spanish Rice, Mixed Veggies, Flour Tortilla, Sliced Pears	25 Beef in Ravioli, Marinara Sauce, California Veggies, Wheat Roll, Applesauce	26 Ham & Cheese Sandwich, Sun Chips, Garden Blend Vegetables, Watermelon
29 Shredded pork, Sweet Potatoes, Cauliflower, Fresh Apple	30 Classic Chicken salad, Tomato Soup, broccoli Salad, Fruit Salad	All Meals Served With 8oz. 2% Milk as available Taos County Senior Program (575) 737-8927 PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE		

This Senior Lunch Menu applies to all Senior Centers in Taos County. Meals are cooked fresh at each location.

Lunch donations recommendations are \$1.50 and up. Lunches for people under 60 years old are \$7.50 a person.

To qualify call the Ancianos at (575) 586-0508. They will fill out an assessment and file an application.

Currently, exercise classes are not available.

Donations for transportation is encouraged.





LIVE LOVE LAUGH

by Ellen Wood
a.k.a. Maruška

The Threat of Alzheimer's Led to My Extraordinary Life

Sometimes it's what we don't want that creates the biggest impetus for changing the course of our lives. That's what happened to me when I started following in my mother's footsteps after

she wasted away with Alzheimer's.

I was in my late 50s when she died, and for the previous ten years or so I had watched Mom slowly deteriorate. The last three years of her life she spent in a nursing home and every time I visited her, I focused on her mental and physical decline.

I had read that Alzheimer's was hereditary so it was no surprise when I found myself in the early stages of the disease several years later. Then one day 20 years ago, I 'woke up' and realized my beliefs and programming about aging were creating a life that I did not want. I saw that I was just slipping into old age and having watched my mother, I was all too familiar with that path.

So I decided to change the course I was on. I had practiced mind/spirit techniques successfully for decades to manifest my desires—but it had never occurred to me to use those techniques

to stem the tide of Alzheimer's. I relied on books and seminars, conferences and meditation retreats to give me action steps to reverse aging, including ones for the body, like brain supplements and the Tibetan Rites of Rejuvenation. Soon a whole program started to emerge and I began making my daily program of youthfulness techniques into habits.

My results were so astounding I had to share these mind/body/spirit practices and my first book, "The Secret Method for Growing Younger," was born. Because this program had reversed my early stages of Alzheimer's, given me tons more energy and kept the breast cancer I had had in 1992 from recurring, I felt it was my purpose to help society change its views of what life can be in our later years.

Today at 87 years old, I'm living proof that this program really does work. Because of my daily practices, I am calmer,

more focused, more loving, happier, wittier, my brain works better, and my creativity is supercharged. Sure, I'm still a work in progress, but this is fun work! You can have a youthful old age, too—if you have a strong desire and are willing to take some time to do the daily practices. At least do the Tibetan Rites of Rejuvenation. Go to youtube.com, put in Ellen Wood Tibetan Rites of Rejuvenation, and follow along with me.

Ten years ago I tested positive for the Alzheimer's gene: APO-e4, but I'm still growing younger and so can you!

Ellen Wood of Questa is an award-winning author as well as an artist using the name, Maruška. The website for her books and paintings is <https://questacreative.org/ellen-wood/>. Contact Ellen at ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

El peligro del Alzheimer me llevó a tener a una vida extraordinaria

A veces, es lo que no queremos lo que crea el mayor impulso para cambiar el rumbo de nuestras vidas. Eso es lo que me pasó a mí cuando empecé a seguir los pasos de mi madre después de que el Alzheimer la consumiera.

Yo tenía casi 60 años cuando ella murió, y durante los diez años anteriores aproximadamente, había observado cómo mamá se deterioraba lentamente. Los últimos tres años de su vida los pasó en un hogar de ancianos y cada vez que la visitaba, me centraba en su declive mental y físico.

Había leído que el Alzheimer era hereditario, así que no fue una sorpresa cuando me encontré yo misma en las primeras etapas de la enfermedad varios años después. Entonces, un día hace 20 años, "desperté" y me di cuenta de que mis creencias y programación sobre el envejecimiento estaban creando una vida que no quería. Vi que simplemente me estaba deslizando hacia la vejez y, después de haber visto lo que le pasó a mi madre, estaba demasiado familiarizada con ese camino.

Fue así que decidí cambiar el rumbo que estaba siguiendo. Había practicado

técnicas mentales/espirituales con éxito durante décadas para manifestar mis deseos, pero nunca se me había ocurrido usar esas técnicas para detener la marea del Alzheimer. Busqué libros y seminarios, conferencias y retiros de meditación para que me dieran pasos a seguir a fin de revertir el envejecimiento, incluyendo los que ayudaban al cuerpo, como suplementos para el cerebro y los Ritos Tibetanos de Rejuvenecimiento. Pronto empezó a surgir todo un programa y mis técnicas diarias para rejuvenecer se convirtieron en hábitos.

Mis resultados fueron tan sorprendentes que tuve que compartir estas prácticas enfocadas en la mente/el cuerpo/ el espíritu y así nació mi primer libro, *The Secret Method for Growing Younger*. Dado que este programa había revertido mis primeras etapas del Alzheimer, me había dado mucha más energía y había evitado que el cáncer de mama que había tenido en 1992 volviera a aparecer, sentí que era mi propósito ayudar a la sociedad a cambiar su visión de lo que puede ser la vida en nuestros últimos años.

Hoy, a los 87 años, soy una prueba viviente de que este programa funciona de verdad. Gracias a mis prácticas diarias, estoy más tranquila y más centrada y soy más amorosa, más feliz y más ingeniosa. El cerebro me funciona mejor y mi creatividad está supercargada. Claro, todavía soy una obra en progreso, ¡pero es una obra divertida! Tú también puedes tener una vejez joven —si sientes un gran deseo de hacerlo y estás dispuesta a dedicar tiempo a hacer las prácticas

diarias. Al menos haz los Ritos Tibetanos de Rejuvenecimiento. Ve a youtube.com, busca Ellen Wood Tibetan Rites of Rejuvenation y practícalos conmigo.

Hace diez años di positiva en la prueba del gen del Alzheimer: APO-e4, ¡pero todavía estoy rejuveneciendo y tú también puedes hacerlo!

Ellen Wood de Questa es una autora galardonada y también una artista que usa el nombre de Maruška. El sitio web de sus libros y pinturas es <https://questacreative.org/ellen-wood/>. Para comunicarse con Ellen escriba a ellen@howtogrowyounger.com

Traducción de Teresa Dovalpage

SCREEEEECH!!

JR (Malaquias) says:



**"Time to
check
your
brakes?"**

Bring your car or truck to us and we'll make those bad-boy brakes stop screeching.



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I DARE YOU

By MARTA GLOVER

Treasures of the Heart: Collections

This month I thought I would hear a lot of April Fools jokes, but the people interviewed chose to speak of collections they had, instead of joking around. Collections can happen at any age at any time and be collected from different places or sources. With collecting, you make something to bring, or to gather together in a group. It could be a childhood thing, collected and added to over and over, and then suddenly dismissed as your interest waned and you got older.

Do you have a collection that you

have added to year after year? Did your collection start when you were young? What influenced your collection? Was there or is there a collection you always wanted but never dared to actually collect?

Ashley:

I always wanted to collect vinyl records but storage and the value have prevented me. I have a key chain collection I started when I was 12 years old because I really liked them. I have a fascination with them. In my adulthood, I am more excited by them. People have started giving them to me when they go on trips. Key chains are sentimental. There is a connection with the people who give them. I share the same memories with them as when they were traveling.

Orin:

I collect joker cards. It is my oldest collection. In high school there were so many different ones. They were the easiest ones to do a card trick with. My goal was to make a whole deck out of different joker cards. I have exceeded this and am still adding to this collection.

Tyler:

My interest in things have changed over the years. I am searching, seeking, collecting pieces of hardwood and fruitwood with the future intention of whittling it into spoons and tools. I became more interested when I found out that you are not supposed to stir honey with a metal spoon, that wood is best, to not affect the medicinal properties of the honey. When I was a kid, I collected Legos.

Rush:

I like collecting bullets to make towers. I find them on a rocky road called the Desert Hills. We were stump hunting there. We can make whistles and harmonicas out of bullets too. It is sick! I have a big Lego collection in a large container and a small container. My Legos are mixed up. I use pieces for new things, especially pieces I have never had before. I keep adding to my Lego bin. The more the better.

Chris:

I used to live with a collector. He had 50 saxophones. He loved the instrument. He went to music school to be a saxo-

phonist. He also repairs saxophones as a profession and has an ongoing repair shop. His creativity is expansive, you can see how his mind works and what his interests are. Some of the saxophones have cool engravings, some are antiques and some are unplayable, hanging on the wall. The first thing he did as a kid, was take a saxophone apart and the fascination began there.

Jenny:

I have a collection of earrings from a local jeweler, David Clarkson. I have necklaces... and our wedding rings are from this same artist. I have collected 20 pairs of earrings over the years from him. All are sterling silver dangle earrings. I like the way they hang, they are light. The necklace I wear is constantly commented upon and admired. It has two engraved great blue herons together in a circle. When I was little, I inherited Barbies and Breyer plastic horses from my older sisters. It was their collection, but I claimed it because there were so many to choose from. I did collect Snoopy stuff. I got a lot of hand-me-downs!

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



By DAWN PROVENCHER

The Greatest Gifts

I am not a grandparent, but I know some pretty good ones. Recently, I was with two old friends who came to visit my fellow non-grandparent husband and me, now known as “Nana” and “My Jim,” who taught me something worth repeating. This information is for all of you who find yourself trying to decide on a gift for a grandchild (or perhaps, ANY child).

As Nana and My Jim emerged from a gift shop carrying just a small bag containing one ladies T-shirt, I said there were more places to look for souvenirs for their five grandchildren. My Jim’s immediate response was “we give them

experiences and our time.”

What? No money spent on refrigerator magnets, tacky T-shirts, personalized key-chains, green chile night lights, or Kokopeli ball caps? I asked if the children would be disappointed. No, I learned, they will look forward to their grandparents’ return and a trip to get ice cream... just as they also go fishing with My Jim, bake cookies with Nana, and sift through their personalized dress-up boxes complete with costume jewelry and vintage clothes passed down through the family. There are solo trips to the go-cart track on their birthdays, monthly deposits into their college accounts, zoo memberships, dress-up-dinner-and-a-movie nights, or trips to the aquarium when their class is studying the ocean. Nothing plastic. Nothing they will outgrow. Nothing they will lose interest in within weeks.

According to Rick Warren, the author of “The Purpose Driven Life,” — When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life that you’ll never get back. Your time is your life. That is why the greatest gift you can give someone is your time. It is not enough to just say relationships are

important; we must prove it by investing time in them. If there is a relationship worthy of the investment of our time, it is with our grandchildren.

If you are lucky enough to be a grandparent, how long do you think your grandson will wear that Grand Canyon T-shirt? How long do you think they will remember going with you to the Grand Canyon? How long will it take them to go through a box of candy at Christmas... or learning to make biscochitos from a family recipe? Hearing stories about you learning to make tamales as a child, while you teach them the secrets of a perfect tamale? A hand-written family cookbook for each child, along with photos of them making the recipes with you? A camping trip, even if it’s only as far as the backyard?

After Nana and My Jim schooled me on this grandparent wisdom, I thought back to my own cherished grandparents who have all been gone 50 years... the year I won a science fair award with the telegraphy set my grandfather helped me build as he related his experiences as a Rock Island Railroad telegrapher during the Depression... my grandmother telling me how a warm egg from the

henhouse was best for the dumplings in her chicken and dumpling recipe... watching her snip the tiny threads on her old black Singer sewing machine. (I asked her if she ate all the little strings she put in her lips.) Or my father’s mother, who was a store detective in downtown Fort Worth, Texas, who I am sure was the only grandmother in the world with a small leather-wrapped billy club that fit in her purse. These are the cherished memories. I am sure they bought me lovely gifts, but I don’t remember any of them.

Whether you are a Nana or a My Jim, a Mita or Tito, Grandma or Grandpa, a Grammy or Grampy, next time you want to show those children they are the loves of your life, take them fishing, bake some cookies, show them old family photos and laugh at the clothes, drive them around the Enchanted Circle, teach them how to roll tamales. Leave the T-shirts at the store. Thank you, Nana and My Jim. I hope one day I can put this wisdom into practice so those much-loved children will know our relationship was a lot more important than a fridge magnet.

FOR MORE NEWS, PHOTOS & EVENT INFO VISIT QUESTANEWS.COM

MAKE ART cont'd from page 17

many in the room had an artist statement? Only three hands were raised. "What is your story? As artists, you need to understand your brand and what differentiates you. Have an artist statement and head-shot photo ready to go for grants, shows, catalogs, and press releases. It's a bio of sorts, a detailed paragraph or two that describes your work, which helps people understand what you do, how and why you're doing it, what influences your work, and what you want them to understand about it."

The group wrote and shared their initial draft artist statements. Then they were told to shorten them into an "elevator speech" that could be conversationally conveyed in 20 to 30 seconds—the theoretical time spent on an elevator when you might be asked, "What do you do?"

Different types of income sources were discussed, with the suggestion that a portfolio of a variety of revenue streams provides a safety net. A Marketing Tools Checklist was reviewed, which

includes 35 items that an artist needs to use to promote their work. Hearn said, "add these to your one-year goals."

The workshop wrapped up with each person sharing what they would work on in the next week (artist statements!). After connecting over the two days of training, emails were exchanged, and a common pledge was made to keep in touch and support each other's art.

If you missed this class, the same workshop is being offered for free on Saturday and Sunday, April 27 and 28 in Peñasco; register here: <https://www.maaa.org/event/artist-inc-express-new-mexico-penasco-in-person/>

Stay tuned for follow-up classes in Questa that will continue to expand on the creative economy business essentials, as there is more to come.

The free workshop was sponsored by Taos County, who received one of 18 inaugural grants from the creative industries division of the New Mexico economic development department. Other sponsors included the Taos Arts Council, Chevron, the Questa Creative Council, Questa Economic Development Fund, and Taos Bakes.

Questa Local Sells Signs to Raise Money for Local Food Pantry

By STAFF WRITERS

Questa local Dan Gonzales is proud to be working to raise money for the North Central Food Pantry.

He is selling signs which read, "Jesus for 2024." The signs are selling for \$20 each and are being sold at Questa Hardware, Questa Station 522, and the Salon del Sol in Questa.

"In an election year, we're going to get inundated with a lot of political messaging, so I wanted to get ahead of it by selling these signs to remember that regardless of who wins politically, Jesus is who matters," Gonzales says.

He got the idea from similar signs he saw in Espanola, encouraging people to turn to Jesus. "Those signs put a smile on my face so I want to encourage people to remember Jesus is everything."

He has sold eight signs so far and hopes to sell up to 30, or more. A portion of the sign cost will cover the price of making the signs and the rest will go to the North Central Food Pantry. Learn more about the North Central Food Pantry at <https://www.ncfpquesta.com/>.



Courtesy photo

Raising Money for the North Central Food Pantry

Questa Lumber & Hardware
2349 NM-522, Questa, NM 87556

Questa Gas Station 522
2474 Hwy 522 Questa, NM 87556

Salon del Sol
(same building as Jameson Dentist)
2451 NM-522, Questa, NM 87556

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND

CHEVRON QUESTA MINE SUPERFUND SITE COMMUNITY MEETING

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, invites you to attend the community meeting for the Chevron Questa Superfund site. The meeting will be held:

Tuesday, April 16, 2024
5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.
VFW Post 7688
2597 North Highway 522
Questa, New Mexico 87556

During the meeting, an update will be provided on current site activities and future cleanup work at the Questa Mine. Following the updates, a question-and-answer session will be open to the public.

Additional site information is available at the site's local document repository located at Village of Questa, 2500 Old State Road 3, P.O. Box 260, Questa, New Mexico 87556.

A site profile can be found at: www.epa.gov/superfund/chevron-questa-mine.

Questions can be directed to Nichole Foster, EPA Remedial Project Manager, at (214)665-7248 or foster.nichole@epa.gov; Janetta Coats, EPA Sr. Community Involvement Coordinator, at (214)665-7308, 1-800-533-3508 (toll-free), or coats.janetta@epa.gov; or Joseph Fox, NMED Project Manager, at (505)222-9560 or joseph.fox@env.nm.gov.

This meeting is being held in a fully accessible facility. Should you have specific needs or questions about the facility, please contact Janetta Coats, EPA Sr. Community Involvement Coordinator, at (214)665-7308, (800)533-3508 (toll-free), or coats.janetta@epa.gov.

Para información en español, comuníquese con la Agencia de Protección Ambiental de los Estados Unidos (la EPA) a 1-800-533-3508 (llamada gratis).



TOEROEK ASSOCIATES, INC.

ESTÁ INVITADO A ASISTIR

A LA REUNIÓN DE LA COMUNIDAD DEL SITIO SUPERFUND CHEVRON QUESTA MINE

La Agencia de Protección Ambiental (la EPA) de EE. UU., en cooperación con el Departamento de Medioambiente de Nuevo México (NMED) y el Departamento de Energía, Minerales y Recursos Naturales de Nuevo México, lo invita a asistir a una reunión de la comunidad para el Sitio Superfund Chevron Questa. La reunión se llevará a cabo el:

16 de abril de 2024
de 5:30 p.m. a 7:30 p.m.
VFW Post 7688
2597 North Highway 522
Questa, Nuevo México 87556

Durante la reunión, se ofrecerá una actualización sobre las actividades actuales del sitio y el futuro trabajo de limpieza en Questa Mine. Después de las actualizaciones, habrá una sesión de preguntas y respuestas abierta para el público.

Se puede encontrar más información sobre el sitio en el depósito local de documentos del sitio, ubicado en la Villa de Questa, 2500 Old State Road 3, P.O. Box 260, Questa, Nuevo México 87556.

El perfil de este sitio puede hallarse en www.epa.gov/superfund/chevron-questa-mine.

Para obtener más información, comuníquese con Nichole Foster, gerente de Proyectos de Remediación de la EPA, Teléfono: (214) 665-7248, Correo electrónico: foster.nichole@epa.gov; Janetta Coats, Coordinadora de Participación Comunitaria Principal de la EPA, Teléfono: (214) 665-7308 o 1-800-533-3508, Correo electrónico: coats.janetta@epa.gov; Joseph Fox, gerente de Proyectos de NMED, Teléfono: (505) 222-9560 Correo electrónico: joseph.fox@env.nm.gov.

Esta reunión se realiza en una instalación totalmente accesible. Si tiene preguntas o necesidades específicas acerca de la instalación, comuníquese con Janetta Coats, coordinadora sénior de Participación Comunitaria de la EPA, en el (214) 665-7308 o el (800) 533-3508 (línea gratuita), o en coats.janetta@epa.gov.

Para obtener información en español, comuníquese con la Agencia de Protección Ambiental (la EPA) de Estados Unidos al 1-800-533-3508 (llamada gratis).

FILTER SALE

CARQUEST QUESTA

2420 St. Hwy 522 - Questa, NM 87556
575.586.0419

ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY

SKYDANCE ESOTERIC ASTROLOGY by Charlene R. Johnson
APRIL 2024

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.” —Carl Jung

This month we experience a total solar eclipse in the U.S. The next one won't be until August 23, 2044. As esoteric scientists we could discuss the unique and perfect distancing of the Sun from the Earth; how the disc of the Moon perfectly fits over the Sun exposing its fiery corona. Were it only a few hundred miles larger or smaller, a few thousand miles closer or further away, this exact phenomenon could not occur. What is the meaning or purpose? Or, we could discuss the idea that the Sun's rays upon the Earth is a direct current and that at specific and regular intervals the intervention of the Moon interrupting the rays of heat, light and magnetism shifts the direct current to an alternating current, which affects organic life on Earth in a positive and apparently necessary way. Who set this magical dynamic up?

We could also discuss that Paracelsus said that we are suns in miniature. Mankind is a microcosm of this planet, in whom we live and move and have our being. The substance of the stars is wrought in us even as the substance of the stars is wrought in our Sun. As above, so below. We say Earth is a tiny microcosm to the gigantic macrocosm of the heavens and we are a reflection of the heavens, thus we too can eclipse. All of these ideas would make for fascinating topics of discussion.

Instead, in view of the upheaval in the world today and that this eclipse is an important time when we can actively participate in making a difference, we choose to discuss views from back in the time of ancient Egypt when Pharaoh Akhenaton chose to defy the worldview of his time and insist that there was a greater god than all of the animals then being revered. He spoke of a secret behind the disc of the Sun and that it was the true god, the source of prana, of life force. And that within the disc of the Sun is a constant, reverberating sound. It bounces around, ricocheting and creating the sound of the Aum/OM which flows outward from the Sun to Earth; a gift. Sounding the OM has a unifying effect when members of a group join in.

Everyone: Sound the Aum on April 8 and help unify the world.

ARIES ♈ Planet: Mercury ♀ MARCH 20 – APRIL 19

Dynamic: A great month for pondering your next venture.
Direction: Ponder only.
Soul Thought: Adventure?

TAURUS ♉ Planet: Vulcan ♁ APRIL 19 – MAY 20

Dynamic: Investment time, yet...
Direction: Be cautious what you do with your money.
Soul Thought: Pretty is as pretty does.

GEMINI ♊ Planet: Venus ♀ MAY 20 – July 20

Dynamic: A time to distinguish yourself.
Direction: In genteel and aesthetic ways.
Soul Thought: Be.

CANCER ♋ Planet: Neptune ♆ July 20 – JULY 22

Dynamic: When darkness hits the world,
Direction: Lift your veil.
Soul Thought: What is the Illusion?

LEO ♌ Planet: Sun ☉ JULY 22 – AUG 22

Dynamic: A disruption in your energy flow is nothing to scoff at.
Direction: Mind the heart.
Soul Thought: When in doubt, Love.

VIRGO ♍ Planet: Moon ☾ AUG 22 – SEPT 22

Dynamic: You may sense unusual power, if temporary.
Direction: Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.
Soul Thought: OM.

LIBRA ♎ Planet: Uranus ♃ SEPT 22 – OCT 22

Dynamic: When your “normal” balance gets shaken, what to do?
Direction: Think outside the box!
Soul Thought: The whole world awaits.

SCORPIO ♏ Planet: Mars ♂ OCT 22 – NOV 21

Dynamic: You may feel an overwhelming drive to do something.
Direction: Reflect first.
Soul Thought: “Everything that happens to us is a reflection of who WE are.” —Deepak Chopra

SAGITTARIUS ♐ Planet: Earth ♁ NOV 21 – DEC 20

Dynamic: A powerful time of change for you.
Direction: Take a stand opposite the eclipse?
Soul Thought: Earth in the balance.

CAPRICORN ♑ Planet: Saturn ♄ DEC 20 – JAN 19

Dynamic: Some powerful dynamics can push you to the top of your mountain.
Direction: Or to the depths of your Soul.
Soul Thought: What's the difference?

AQUARIUS ♒ Planet: Jupiter ♃ JAN 19 – FEB 18

Dynamic: Money and relationships are entangled.
Direction: Determine how to make the most of it.
Soul Thought: Matter is frozen light and light is love.

PISCES ♓ Planet: Pluto ♇ FEB 18 – MAR 20

Dynamic: It may be time to form a group.
Direction: A secret society?
Soul Thought: To hide or not to hide?

To discover your Rising Sign, or for more information, contact Charlene R. Johnson, www.SkyDanceAstrology.com, or email: SkyDance@SkyDanceAstrology.com

Esoteric Astrology is focused on the rising sign more than the sun sign (we suggest you read both) and provides clarity, direction and answers for those seeking a higher level of life.



By J. ORTEGA

THE IRON CLAW

Starring: Zac Efron, Jeremy Allen White, Holt McCallany, Maura Tierney, Lily James

RATED R

Available to rent on AmazonPrimeVideo, Appletv, Vudu

First Impression: *The Iron Claw* is a heartbreaking family drama that depicts the rise and tragic fall of one of professional wrestling's most legendary families: the Von Erichs.

When you think of professional wrestling today, you think of flashy big market productions with pyrotechnics galore, and dozens of tv cameras and interviews with these larger-than-life wrestlers—all vying for the most coveted prize in all of professional wrestling—the championship belt. With the belt comes fame, glory, riches and most importantly, the backing and respect of the business itself.

In today's world the biggest wrestlers are more than likely working for the behemoth World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). Over the last two decades WWE, led by the infamous Vince McMahon, has been able to conquer the world of professional wrestling, within which he holds an unofficial monopoly on the business as a whole.

If you want to be a star, you have to go through the system at WWE, and gain the trust of the McMahan family in order to go anywhere with your career as a professional wrestler. And that's what makes the movie “The Iron Claw” so interesting. It takes place in the late 1970s through the mid-80s, when it truly was the wild west of pro wrestling. Most wrestling back then was divided up into territories, where certain wrestling promoters would control these territories and only their wrestlers could compete there. It was a very feudalistic system to say the least, but it led to a very passionate and loyal fan base for certain wrestling families and that

is the era we are dropped into with this film: the Von Erich family.

The Von Erich family is led by patriarch Fritz Von Erich who runs the Dallas, Texas wrestling territory. Fritz is also a former wrestler who is shown as a tough emotionless guy who wants more than anything for his sons to become the most famous wrestlers that the world has ever seen. That's quite a tall ask and immense pressure for the Von Erich brothers, but they love their father and their family and that's really the strength of the film as a whole. These characters really care about each other and have each other's backs no matter what.

And that's also what makes the film so unbelievably tragic at times. We find out that there is something called the “Von Erich Curse” that all the family fears because of the sudden unexpected death of their oldest brother Jack who was electrocuted and drowned when he was just 6 years old. I don't want to give away the rest of the movie, but there are more bewildering events that happened to the family that seem beyond the pale... but that makes for a very interesting film that will impact you on an emotional level.

Overall this is a solid film, a must-see for any former or current wrestling fan. And if you don't know the difference between a piledriver and a powerbomb, this movie is just as accessible for you.

Final Verdict: 4 out of 5 stars



FOR MORE NEWS, PHOTOS & EVENT INFO VISIT QUESTANEWS.COM



On Monday April 22, we will celebrate Earth Day! Our daily choices greatly impact our planet. Try celebrating Earth Day by being mindful of what you eat, buy seasonal produce (like artichokes) and know where and how your food is grown (try Cerro Vista Farms!). Also celebrated in April is national burrito day on April 4 and national egg salad week! Here's a few recipes to help you celebrate April!

Egg Salad

Recipe by Gina Homolka

Ingredients:

- 6 hard boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
- 3 tbs mayonnaise
- 1 tsp finely chopped red onion
- 1/8 tsp kosher salt
- Fresh black pepper, to taste
- 1/8 tsp sweet paprika, for garnish
- Chopped chives

Combine all the ingredients and refrigerate until ready to eat.

Spread on your favorite toasted bread or eat with crackers.



Photo Credit Jess Larson

Oatmeal Cookies

Recipe by Sunny Beckley

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (softened)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 3/4 cup flour (1 sub 1/4 cup whole wheat)
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1- 1/5 cups of quick oats
- 1 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350 degree F

Grease baking sheet.

Beat sugar and butter until creamy, beat in egg and vanilla.

Combine flour, baking soda and salt in a separate bowl. Stir into butter sugar mix. Stir in oats and raisins.

Use rounded tablespoons to measure out dough balls and place 2 inches apart.

Bake for 12 min until lightly browned.

Let stand for 1 min and remove onto racks to cool.

Eat all the cookies.



Photo courtesy of Love and Lemons

Artichokes

Recipe by Gonzales

Ingredients:

- 6 large artichokes
- 1 lemon, plus more lemon juice to taste if desired

To prepare the artichokes for steaming, pull off the outermost leaves and discard. Trim the stem, leaving one about inch attached. Cut off the top 1/4 of the artichoke and discard. Snip off remaining thorns with scissors.

Add a few inches of water, the juice from your cut lemon, and about 1 teaspoon salt to a large pot, then place in your steamer basket and bring water to simmer. Add the artichokes. Cover and steam until the artichokes are cooked through, about 25 minutes.

When artichokes are tender, remove from the steamer and season to taste with salt, pepper, and lemon juice (if desired). Serve warm with aioli dip or your favorite mayonnaise for dipping.

When eating an artichoke, discard the center "choke" (fuzzy hair like fiber). The edible part is located at the base of the petal. Pull the base of petal through slightly clenched teeth to strip off the petal meat. Pull off and eat the individual petals from the cooked artichoke, marking your way down to the heart of the artichoke.



A FREE COMMUNITY EVENT WITH OVER 30 FUN HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES!

SATURDAY, APRIL 13th, 2024 12-4pm
ENOS GARCIA GYM, TAOS

For more info, see twirltaos.org/invent-event, email nina@twirltaos.org or call 575.751.1402



Free fun for the whole family!
 Make, Craft, Build & Play!

twirl 
 A PLAY & DISCOVERY SPACE



TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 9 AM - 5 PM

EVERYTHING OFF-ROAD DONE RIGHT!

J&L POWERSPORTS

NEW LOCATION IN QUESTA NOW OPEN!

ATV • dirt bike • sideXside • snowmobile

2627 NM-522, Questa, NM, 87556
 (575) 586-2417 • jlpowersports21.com



If you have a recipe you would like featured in an upcoming issue of Enchanted Eats, please submit to assistanteditor@questanews.com

OBITUARIES



Steve Arellano
d. March 6, 2024

Steve Arellano, 64, of San Cristobal, New Mexico, peacefully passed away on March 6, 2024. He is preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Mary Arellano; sister Elizabeth Arellano, and nephew Leroy Rael. Steve is survived by his children; Rosa, Angelina, and Emilio, and their mother Annette; grandchildren Cayden and Desiree; sisters Louise, Paula, and Karen, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. Steve graduated from Taos High School in 1978. A talented mechanic, Steve's family lived in Arizona and Silver City before finding their way back home to San Cristobal. He seized every opportunity to ski. Steve found joy in motorcycles and the mountains and had a deep love for music. Those who cherished him will fondly remember playing guitar and singing alongside him.



Mercedes Maes Jaramillo
d. March 4, 2024

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Mercedes Maes Jaramillo, on March 4, 2024, following a brief illness. Our mother passed peacefully surrounded by her family at St. Vincent's Hospital in Santa Fe. She was born on February 7, 1926, in Valdez, New Mexico, to Max and Magdalena (Nene) Maes. She spent her childhood there and in Black Lake, New Mexico. As a teenager she moved with her aunt and cousin, Delfina Maes Martinez, to Cheyenne, Wyoming to work. In 1946, having returned to New Mexico, she met the love of her life, Hernando Jaramillo of Questa, at a dance in Taos. They were soon married and had a family of eight children they raised in Questa, which became her

lifelong home. She instilled the importance of church and faith to her children, as well as the importance of education. Her children have fond memories of her always singing; she had a beautiful voice and loved singing her favorite song "Que Sera, Sera." Our mom loved having her family around, and for her children and grandchildren "Grandma J's" will always be home. She always loved those big Christmas Eves when her house would be packed and full of love. Our mother had a great love for all her nephews and nieces as well.

Our mom was preceded in death by her husband, Hernando Jaramillo; son Lawrence Jaramillo; grandsons Brad Jaramillo, Cruz Chavez II; great-grandson Andres Chavez; parents Max and Magdalena Maes; sisters Cecilia Rael (Fred), Fedelina Trujillo (Isaac); and brothers Manuel Maes (Lupe) and Amadeo Maes (Mary). She is survived by children: Marilyn Jaramillo, Elma Chavez (Cruz), Sandra Jaramillo (Ben Bowles), Bob Jaramillo (Martha), Bernie Jaramillo (Geraldine), Edwin Jaramillo (Arla), Vince Jaramillo (Debbie O'Dell) and daughter-in-law Evangeline Jaramillo; grandchildren Brent Jaramillo, Emily Jaramillo, Lenora Jaramillo, Nando Chavez (Jacquie), Jovonne O'Connell (Jeremiah), Elizabeth Jaramillo (Kayvon), Luke Macias, and Christopher Jaramillo; step-grandchildren Derek Gallegos (Erica), Amber Martinez (Nick), and Ozelle Segura (Julian). She is also survived by 27 great-grandchildren, five great-great-grandchildren; by cousins Elias Espinosa (Connie), Stella Casias, and Dolores Pacheco; as well as numerous nephews and nieces.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Gloria Romero, who served as our mom's Eucharistic Minister for many years.



Daniel "Danny" Martinez
d. March 4, 2024

Daniel "Danny" Martinez, age 75, of Garcia, Colorado, passed away unexpectedly on February 25, 2024. Daniel loved the outdoors. He was avid hunter, guide

and fisherman. Danny was a true cowboy; in his younger years he loved riding and breaking horses. He enjoyed teaching his grandchildren about the outdoors. He liked giving rides on the backhoe, 4-wheelers, and the boat. Danny was a people person. He loved large gatherings, barbecues, and cooking in the horno. Danny would tell stories about his hunting adventures. He liked joking around with his buddies, singing, and playing his guitar. Danny was always willing to help anyone. He had a heart of gold. He will be greatly missed.

Daniel is survived by his wife of 25 years, Helen G. Miera, siblings Frank (Virginia) Martinez, Alonzo "Harlen" (Hazel) Martinez, Rufina (Terry) Golkowski; sons David "Bart" Martinez, Juan (Vera) Romero; daughters Donna Jo (Johnny) Martinez, Debbie (Brian) Martinez, Amanda Leon, and Wendy (Ted) Vigil. He is also survived by his many proud grandchildren and great-grandchildren and his numerous nieces, nephews and many friends.

Daniel was preceded in death by his parents, Arcenio & Inumenia Martinez; brothers Archie Martinez, Leandro Martinez, Donald Martinez and Michael Martinez; sisters; Delmeria Lovato, Urcilia Auth, Virginia Kessler, Veronica Lovato; sons Danny Romero, Brad Romero, Daniel W. Martinez; daughter Yvonne Maes; granddaughters Isabella Rose Vigil, Nichole Martinez, and Jessica M. Martinez.

Rosary was recited on Thursday March 14, 2024 at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Costilla, followed by the Mass of Christian burial. The burial will follow at the Garcia Cemetery in Garcia Colorado and a meal will follow at the Parish Hall after the services.



Olivia Rael
d. March 8, 2024

With great sadness, the family of Olivia F. Rael of Questa, New Mexico announced that she passed away at home peacefully in her sleep on Friday, March 8, 2024. She was 83 years old. Twelve years ago, while reciting a rosary in church for a young man who had passed away, she survived a massive stroke that left her wheelchair-

bound, and she lost function to the left side of her body. However, she never lost her faith or sense of humor. She loved talking and joking with family and friends whenever she saw them. She never failed to say "God bless you" before parting ways with anyone.

She was born on September 2, 1940, to Eloy and Manuelita Rael. She grew up in Questa among many family whom she had very close ties to. Hard work and compassion were ingrained in her from a very young age. She managed to always have a positive outlook on life and counted on her deep Catholic faith to carry her through all the situations that life handed to her.

Olivia is preceded in death by her beloved husband of 50 years, Jose Richard Rael, Sr.; stepdaughters Geralyn Rael and Valerie Rael; her parents Eloy and Manuelita Rael; baby sister Carmelita Rael; brother Epimenio Rael, sister Eloisa Rael, sisters-in-law Florence Rael and Margaret Rael-Cummings, and most recently, her niece Fabiola Torrez.

She is survived by her daughter Annette Ortega (Michael); stepsons Jose Richard Rael, Jr (Amanda) and James Kelly Rael; grandchildren Jeremy Ortega, Mikayla Ortega, Elijah Ortega, Angela Rael, Melecio Rael, and Rachel Rael; great grandson Micah Martin, and father of her great-grandson Cory Martin; brother retired Deacon Felimon Rael, and several nieces and nephews; special and dear friend Viola Garcia, also Collette Herrera, Maria Culbertson, Okie Velasquez, Bernice Wells, Gloria Romero, Angela Chavez and dear cousin Annadella Cisneros.

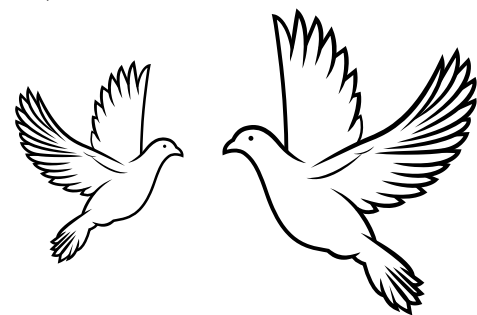
Rosary was recited on Friday, March 22, 2024; Mass of Christian burial was on Saturday, March 23, both at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Questa. Burial followed at El Pueblito Cemetery.



Robert "Zeus" Reese
d. March 7, 2024

Robert "Zeus" Reese, long-time resident of Elizabethtown, New Mexico, passed away in his sleep the night of March 7, 2024 at the ripe old age of 78, despite his many attempts to be eaten by a bear or

mountain lion. Zeus was born on February 6, 1946, to Otis James Renolds and Ida Margaret Johnson in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. Zeus earned his nickname in high school due to his commitment to growing the longest beard. Whether the nickname or the larger-than-life personality came first is up for debate. Being an adventure seeker, Zeus left Roanoke Rapids and headed for New Orleans, where he met Peggy Massarini and sired his firstborn son, Ashley Vinson Massarini. Zeus attended the historic 1969 Woodstock Music Festival and joined some hippies on their way to Taos, New Mexico to join the North Star Commune. During his time in the commune, Zeus met Cheryl and fathered two daughters, Rachel and Carrie Reynolds. After leaving North Star, Zeus made his home in Elizabethtown and started his lifelong pursuit and passion for bear and mountain lion hunting. Zeus got his first hound dogs and started training them with Dirk Neal and Pancho Trujillo in 1973. It wasn't long before Zeus got his bear tattoo on his hand to commemorate killing his 100th bear. Zeus also built up his hunting business, Moreno Valley Outfitters, with the help of Mary Jo Kelly, Dirk Neal, and Mike Bucks. An avid hunter and fisher, Zeus was most often found in the mountains, on Eagle Nest Lake, or in a beat-up pickup truck, with friends like Dirk Neal, Jerry Metzler, Kenny Skolnick, Mike Sager, Pancho Trujillo, Valde DeHerera, Mike Bucks, Ernie Sutliff, Dave Ambrose, Jerry Campbell, Jim Kelly, Pauly Groeber, Don Rosso, Phil Hall, Gary Bowen, or all his Okie buddies. Zeus loved drinking and dancing at the Motherlode Saloon in Red River or at the Goonie in Eagle Nest. Zeus and Mary Jo had two children, Emily Ray Reese and James Hunter Reese, who were raised on elk meat and rainbow trout. Ashley fathered Zeus's first grandson, Ashton Hunter Massarini, and James Hunter fathered Zeus's second grandson, Bear Orion Reese. He was preceded in death by his infant granddaughter, Leah Reese. Ashton Hunter and Bear have been handed the torch to carry on Zeus's legacy. A service was held at the Elizabethtown Cemetery on March 30, 2024, followed by a potluck at the Goonie.





Village of Questa Clean Up Day

FRIDAY

APRIL

26

1:00 PM
to
3:00 PM

SATURDAY

APRIL

27

10:00 AM
to
2:00 PM



ITEMS NOT ALLOWED: TIRES, REFRIGERATION EQUIPMENT, CHEMICALS, PAINT, & ASBESTOS

Roll off dumpsters will be available to Village Customers located behind the Administration Office 2500 Old State Rd. 3 Questa, NM 87556

For more info contact
(575) 586-0694



OPEN TO QHS SENIORS SCHOLARSHIP

**DEADLINE:
MONDAY
MAY 6, 2024**

The Chevron Scholarship Committee is accepting applications from Questa High School seniors. The scholarship is meant to assist students in paying for costs associated with higher education and vocational studies.

Qualifying factors for seniors who are interested in applying for the scholarship include:

- Must be in good academic standing with Questa Sr. High School
- Must plan to enroll for the first time in a full-time program at an accredited college, university, or vocational school for the Summer or Fall 2024 semester
- Must be current seniors

Students can pick up scholarship applications at the Questa High School counselor's office. Applications must be submitted or postmarked by Monday, May 6, 2024.



Chevron is proud to sponsor this ad in support of the *Questa Del Rio News*.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR • APRIL 2024

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN APRIL!

APRIL 5: SAT 9 AM - 12:30 PM Character Counts Training sponsored by Living Word Ministries. FREE. Calling parents, grandparents, teachers, mentors and coaches. You can register for a 3.5 hour session. Learn how character counts! This can help prepare your kids for school, sports, work and life. Online training. RSVP at (575) 613-8010

APRIL 6: SAT 2 PM Taos Area Geology Talk. Dr. Ragland will speak at the Kit Carson Electric Coop boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta in Taos. Is seismic activity a thing of the past? No, says Dr. Ragland. While not an immediate danger, there was a 3.8 magnitude earthquake near Nambé on Oct. 17, 2011. She'll also give her interpretation of the Taos Hum. Info: Michael Wilson, (612) 743-6546

APRIL 8: MON 6 PM Questa Economic Development Fund Board Meeting in person at the Questa Visitor Center and online via Zoom. For an agenda and Zoom Link, email Lynn@QuestaEDF.com

APRIL 12: FRI 10 AM - NOON Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd. Info: (575) 586-0486

APRIL 13: SAT NOON - 4 PM Twirl presents the 7th Annual Invent Event, a free community event with over 30 fun hands-on activities. Free fun for the whole family! At the Enos Garcia Gym 305 Don Fernando St, Taos. Info: twirltaos.org/invent-event_nina@twirltaos.org, or call (575) 751-1402

APRIL 15: MON 3 - 5 PM Questa Library Book Club at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Join the conversation. We will be reading about Alan Ginsberg and the Beat Generation. Info: (575) 586-2023

APRIL 16: TUE 11 AM - 1 PM Business Micro Grant Info Session & Grant Writing Workshop. Come get assistance in completing your grant application for the RDC Micro-Grant, providing up to \$3,000 - to help for-profit businesses sustain or grow revenue. At the Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. For more information about the workshop, email Lynn@QuestaEDF.com; for grant info and to apply go to <https://www.rdcnm.org/microgrant-fund> or call (505) 820-1226

5:30 - 7:30 PM Community Meeting for the Chevron Questa Superfund Site at Questa VFW Post 7688, 2597 Highway 522. Receive an update on current site activities and future cleanup work at the Superfund site. A question-and-answer session will be open to the public. Info: (214) 665-7248

5:30 - 8 PM Taos Mesa Animal Sanctuary fundraiser at El Monte Sagrado, 317 Kit Carson Road in Taos. "A Night of Compassion and Hope" is a fundraising event for at-risk animals across Taos County. In partnership with Chef Cristina Martinez, come experience an inspiring night of goodness for the residents and animals of Taos County. Enchilada dinner, presentation, live music. \$80 per person. Info: (575) 999-5992

APRIL 17: WED 6 PM Questa Independent School Board Meeting at QISD Board Room, 2256 Wildcat Rd. # A. School Board Meeting. Info: (575) 586-0421

APRIL 18: THUR NOON - 4 PM In-person, one-on-one, business advising in Questa at the Questa Visitor Center, 1 NM-38, with Anwar Kaelin, Director of the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL for anyone in any stage of business. Make an appointment by visiting: calendly.com/sbdctaos

5 PM Cerro VFW Post #9516 Monthly Meeting at Cerro VFW, 108 NM Highway 378. Info: (575) 586-2352

APRIL 22: MON 9 AM - 2 PM Earth Day Clean-Up and Beautification at Questa Municipal Park, Eagle Rock Lake; Questa Village Center. Everyone welcome! Info: (575) 779-5601 or (575) 224-9066, go to LEAPsite.org

APRIL 26: FRI 10 AM - NOON Food for All at North Central NM Food Pantry, 140 Embargo Rd. Info: (575) 586-0486

1 PM Twirl Steam Play at Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road. Join Twirl for Easy Breezy fun. Experiment with lift and loft through parachute play, paper airplane challenges and creating windsocks. This program is geared towards elementary-aged children and their families. Parents and kids learn together as they play, create & explore. Info: (575) 586-2023

1 PM - 3 PM Village of Questa Clean Up Day, roll-off dumpsters will be available to Village customers; located behind the Admin Office at 2500 Old State Rd. 3 in Questa. Info: (575) 586-0694

2 PM - 6 PM Forest and Watershed Job Fair, at Bataan Hall in Taos at 121 Civic Plaza Dr.. Sponsored by the Nature Conservancy and UNM-Taos. Info: melissa.mclamb@tnc.org or call 505-946-2022

APRIL 27: SAT 10 - 11:30 AM Sala Writing Group free, via Zoom, link upon request yogasalaquesta.org

10 AM - 2 PM Village of Questa Clean Up Day, roll-off dumpsters will be available to Village customers; located behind the Admin Office at 2500 Old State Rd. 3 in Questa. Info: (575) 586-0694

MAY 1: WED Applications for Questa Art Tour due. Complete yours at: questacreative.org/about-the-tour

MAY 4: SAT 2 - 4 PM Woman's Spa Day Out. Hair cuts, massages, hand massaging and waxing, foot massages and soaks, make overs! Come relax amidst diffused biblical oils. At Living Word Ministries 12 Llano Rd Questa. Info: (575) 613-8010

6 PM Holy Moments Worship and Personal Ministry time, at Living Word Ministries 12 Llano Rd Questa. Info (575) 613-8010

WEEKLY

SUNDAY

Area Church Directory is on page 31, please call to confirm service times

10 AM Qigong event with Julian, online only, sponsored by Yoga Sala. More info and link: yogasalaquesta.org

10 - 11 AM You are My Sunshine Sundays! Mommy & Baby Yoga with Jiwanshakti. 5 week series beginning April 7 - May 5. In person only at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa yogasalaquesta.org

MONDAY

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

5 PM Free Community Yoga, gentle practice with Rae, in person only, free classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

7 PM Kickboxing, with Reto, in person only, sliding scale \$5-\$15; classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

TUESDAY

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

4:30 - 5:30 PM Free Kids Ballet with Miss Tuesday, in person only. Classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

6 TO 7:45 PM Kundalini, Meditation and Gong, with Jiwanshakti, in person and Online 6 week series, April 2 - May 7. Info: yogasalaquesta.org

7 - 8:30 PM Japanese Martial Arts at the Red River Conference Center. \$10 Mat fee, must be 18yrs and older. Info: (575) 754-1708

WEDNESDAY

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

9 AM Gentle Morning Yoga, with Gaea, in person only, \$8 classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

10 AM - 2 PM Repurposing Plastic Project: Come smash plastic and make wire walls! At the old "Movies at Home" building opposite the new Sangre de Cristo Valley Market on Hwy 522. Call or text (575) 224-7386

1:30 - 2:30 PM Wildcat Kitty Club at the Questa Public Library, for ages 0-3. Older siblings and guests are welcome. Stories, songs, and play. 6 1/2 Municipal Park Rd. Info: (575) 586-2023

5 - 7 PM Grief Sharing Support Group at Living Word Ministries for when you need help dealing with grief. 12 Llano Rd in Questa. Info: (575) 613-8010

5:30 PM Power Hour Yoga with Gaea, in person, \$8 at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

7 PM Kickboxing, with Reto in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

THURSDAY

Transportation for Qualified Seniors by donation, Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call for more info and to make an appointment (575) 586-0508

10 AM Kundalini Yoga with Julian, in person only, \$8-\$15 NOTE: No class April 4 or 11. At Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org

2:30 - 4:30 PM Dropped Stitch Group meets at the Questa Public Library, 6 1/2 Municipal Park Rd. We knit, crochet, laugh, teach and learn. Bring your projects. All levels welcome. Info: (575) 586-2023

5 - 9 PM Ceramic Cafe Free Open Studio at the Questa Family & Youth Center art room, next to the Questa Library, at 10 Municipal

Park Drive. Ages 12 and under need to be accompanied by an adult. Info: (402) 525-7485 or email: questacreativecouncil@gmail.com

6 PM Thursday Night Jam Session at Rael's Market & Coffee House; bring your instrument to jam or just bring yourself and enjoy. Free! 2430 NM-Hwy 522, Questa. Info: (575) 779-9249

7 - 8:30 PM Japanese Martial Arts at the Red River Conference Center. \$10 Mat fee must be 18yrs and older. 101 River St in Red River. Info: (575) 754-1708

FRIDAY

10:00 AM Free Community Qigong with Julian, in person only, free at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa. More info: yogasalaquesta.org NOTE: No class April 5 or 12

10 AM - 2 PM Repurposing Plastic Project: Come smash plastic and make wire walls! At the old "Movies at Home" building opposite the new Sangre de Cristo Valley Market on Hwy 522. Call or text (575) 224-7386

4 - 7 PM Prom Girl Boutique at Living Word Ministries, 12 Llano Rd in Questa. Donate clothes and accessories for girls to use at prom. Pick out a dress for your prom! Info: (303)-807-2801

6 - 8 PM Live Music every other Friday with Chris Arellano and family and friends, 101 Bar & Grill (formerly The Crazy Beaver), 101 County Rd 13.2, Garcia, CO 81152. Call to confirm: (719) 672-9022

SATURDAY

10:30 PM Free Community Tai Chi with Reto, in person only, classes at Yoga Sala, 2331 NM-522, in Questa, More info: yogasalaquesta.org



WELCOME TO THE NEW AREA ONLINE CALENDAR OF EVENTS!



The same area online calendar is now shared on all of the following sites...

QuestaNews.com
QuestaCreative.org
QuestaLibrary.org
Questa-NM.com
VisitQuesta.com

Now you can upload your event once on any of the websites and it will appear on all of the above sites for **FREE!**



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<https://questanews.com/questa-events/#/show?distance=15>

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

Safety and Health Specialist, Granite: The position is responsible for collaborating in the administration of the Company's Safety and Health Management System (SHMS) and the corresponding regulations that relate to the safety of work. To apply, visit ZipRecruiter.com and search Safety and Health Specialist Granite.

Heavy Equipment Operator, Granite: Heavy Equipment Operators are responsible for safely and efficiently operating various pieces of heavy mobile equipment, including but not limited to Dozers, Loaders, Excavators, Articulated Trucks. To apply, visit ZipRecruiter.com and search Heavy Equipment Operator Granite.

Entry Security Guard Assistant, New Mexico Professional Group: Our client, a large, well-known company located in Questa, is now hiring security guards! Security guards are responsible for answering alarms, responding to calls for service, and may apprehend or detain individuals who pose a threat to security. As a security guard, you will monitor access to the company's property and buildings, in order to prevent or stop incidents, such as theft or violence, from occurring on company grounds. To apply, visit Entry Security Guard Assistant job in Questa, NM (newmexicoprofessionalgrou.com)

Special FBI Agent, FBI: FBI Special Agents apply their professional expertise and unique skill sets to their work and role every day. As a Special Agent with a military or law enforcement background, you can apply your tactical skills, leadership, integrity and teamwork to gathering evidence or helping to dismantle a criminal enterprise. This position is full-time and permanent in Questa. To apply, visit [Careers \(fbijobs.gov\)](http://Careers(fbijobs.gov))

Questa Senior Center Lunches. Lunches are no longer served to-go. Lunch is served from noon to 1 p.m. and the recommended donation is upward of \$1.50 each. 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.

SLV Spay & Neuter Alliance Mobile Clinic offers low-cost spay and neuter services for cats and dogs in San Luis, Alamosa, and other towns in southern Colorado on a rotating basis. Surgeries include age-appropriate rabies and distemper vaccines. Microchips, bordetella vaccines, dewormer, nail trims, and mat removal are available at additional cost. Book appointments easily online at slvsna.org or call (719) 657-7076.

NOTICES

Free Transportation for Qualified Seniors Monday through Thursday. Donations are encouraged. Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.

Repurposing Plastic Project: Wednesdays & Fridays 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Come smash plastic and make wire walls! Meet the team, work your body, lift your spirit, and help the planet! At the RPP World Headquarters, the old "Movies at Home" building opposite the supermarket on Hwy 522. For more info, call or text (575) 224-7386.

North Central New Mexico Food Pantry: Second and fourth Fridays, 10 a.m. – noon: 140 Embargo Rd. in Questa. If you need an emergency food box or other information, please call: Jeannie Masters (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194, or Nancy Parker (575) 586-2096 or (505) 699-7563. To make a donation, go to ncfpquesta.com or mail to: North Central Food Pantry, PO Box 1076, Questa, NM 87556. For more information, please email wrmesquire2@gmail.com. If you would like to volunteer, please call Jeannie (numbers above).

Questa One-on-One In-Person Business Counseling with Director of the Small Business Development Center at UNM-Taos Anwar Kaelin. FREE and CONFIDENTIAL offered on the third Thursday of every month, 1– 4 p.m., at the Questa Visitor Center. Business owners, independent contractors, and entrepreneurs in the Questa area can receive free one-on-one business consulting and support in planning, marketing, regulatory compliance, technology development, accessing capital, international trade, and more. Also offered via Zoom on the same day 2– 3 p.m.: <https://zoom.us/j/5757376219>. Join by phone: (346) 248-7799 with ID (575) 737-6219. For an appointment, or more information, contact Anwar at anwar@unm.edu

CHURCH DIRECTORY

QUESTA

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Father Andrew Ifele (575) 586-0470
Sunday 8 a.m. only.

MISSION CHURCHES OF ST. ANTHONY'S:
Costilla - Sagrado Corazon - Sunday 9 a.m.
Cerro - Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe - 2nd & 4th Saturdays 4 p.m.
Amalia - Santo Niño - 1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m.

FREEDOM CENTER CHURCH
(previously Harvest Questa)
Pastors Kristi & Johnny Gonzales
2558 Hwy 522, Questa
Sunday Service 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
(575) 770-1714
Visit us online: freedomquesta.com

LIVING WORD MINISTRIES
Pastors Peter and Gayle Martinez
12 Llano Road, Questa
Service: Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Nursery and Kids' Church at 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.
www.lwmsite.com (575) 586-1587

PATH OF LOVE
Sunday 7:30 a.m. class and meditation in-person north of Questa or on Zoom. For more info: (575) 770-1682 or gabrielle.herbertson@gmail.com

THEOSOPHY
Northern New Mexico Alice Bailey Study Group.
Sunday and Wednesday 10 a.m.- NOON on Zoom.
For more info, contact Francis at oeaohoo17@gmail.com

QUESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST
2 miles north of Questa on State Road 522
Sunday Bible Class Sunday 9:30 a.m.
followed by worship at 10:15 a.m.

KAGYU MILA GURU SANGHA
Tibetan Buddhism
Monday 11 a.m. Green Tara. Friday 1 pm Chenrezig both in-person and on Zoom. For more info www.earthjourney.org or contact Gabrielle at info@earthjourney.org or (575) 770-1682

KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
(575) 586-1947

AMALIA

SANTO NIÑO MISSION CHURCH
1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m.

ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Fellowship 3rd Sunday of the month
Highway 196, Amalia
Pastors: Lorenzo & Arleen Lucero
(575) 770-5716

RED RIVER

FAITH MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP
Corner of River Street and Copper King Trail
Sunday 10:30 a.m.
First Baptist Church of Red River
103 High Cost Trail
Sundays 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Pastor Joe Phillips (575) 754-2882

ST. EDWIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
North end of Silver Bell Trail, Red River
Saturday 6 p.m. (Confession prior to Mass or by appt.) Father Andrew Ifele (575) 586-0470

⚠

<p>AA MEETINGS Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity and Love.</p>	<p>QUESTA: Sundays 10-11 a.m. Questa Youth Center</p>	<p>RED RIVER: Tuesdays 7- 8 p.m. 417 E. High St. (Erik's Workshop)</p>
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HEY LOCAL ARTISTS! **SIGN UP!**

Questa
ART TOUR

Questa Art Tour is August 10-11
APPLICATIONS DUE **MAY 1**

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✓ more info at QuestaCreative.org

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